

Skilling for Change



Final Evaluation Report
For the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women

Table of Contents

1. Key Messages	3
2. Executive Summary	4
2.1 Programme Overview	4
2.2 Evaluation Methodology	4
2.3 Key Findings	5
2.4 Recommendations	8
3. Overview	10
3.1 Programme Overview	10
3.2 Evaluation Overview	12
3.3 Limitations	15
4. Relevance	18
4.1 Women’s Economic Empowerment in Rwanda	18
4.2 Meeting Beneficiary Needs	20
5. Effectiveness	22
5.1 Demand-Led Skilling	23
5.2 Employment and Entrepreneurship Outcomes	23
5.3 Collaboration	24
6. Impact on Skills and Capability	26
6.1 Business Skills	26
6.2 Financial Knowledge and Skills	28
6.3 Enterprise Skills	32
6.4 Mobile Linkage Skills	34
7. Impact on Business Growth	36
7.1 Business Ownership	37
7.2 Revenue and Profits	38
7.3 Employees	40
7.4 Diversification	40
7.5 Business Investment	41
7.6 Access to Finance	43
8. Women’s Economic Empowerment	45
8.1 Entrepreneurship	45
8.2 Financial Inclusion	46
8.3 Household Finances and Decision Making	47
8.4 Leadership	49
8.5 Time	49
9. Impact of the Global Mentoring Programme	50
10. Indirect and Unanticipated Impact	53
10.1 Indirect Impact	53
10.2 Unanticipated Impact	54
11. Efficiency	55
11.1 Logframe and Planning	55
11.2 Cost Efficiency	55
12. Sustainability	57
13. Learning	59
14. Conclusions	62
15. Recommendations	66
Appendices	68

© The Research Base, 2016

The Research Base is a social research consultancy specialising in education and skills in international development. www.theresearchbase.com | info@theresearchbase.com

Acronyms

CBFW:	Cherie Blair Foundation for Women
FFI:	Formal Financial Institution
MIS:	Management Information System
MLS:	Mobile Loan Solution
NSD:	No Significant Differences
RCWE:	Rwandan Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs
RWF:	Rwandan Franc
SACCO:	Savings and Credit Co-operative
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VSLA:	Village Savings & Loans Association

1. Key Messages

- The Skilling for Change programme is highly relevant to beneficiary needs in Rwanda, and has been designed to meet these needs effectively.
- The programme created high levels of positive impact in terms of improving women entrepreneurs' business skills, enterprise skills and confidence.
- Over 90% of participants' businesses showed high levels of growth over the course of the programme; beneficiaries also streamlined multiple businesses to focus on those that are most profitable.
- Intensive training pathways yielded stronger levels of impact than for those in the mainstream programme, suggesting that this model may be more effective.
- The programme had an indirect impact on women's families and communities, with improved household income and resources leading to better access to health and education, and women entrepreneurs sharing their learning with their peers.
- Women demonstrated increased empowerment as a result of the training, with more equal decision making and financial management opportunities, in addition to improved confidence levels.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Programme Overview

Skilling for Change is a two-year initiative, founded in 2014 by the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women (CBFW) and delivered in partnership with CARE International, with the support of Accenture. The primary aim of the programme is *'to promote the long-term economic independence of up to 15,600 women entrepreneurs by developing the key skills they need to grow their businesses'*.¹ To date, the programme has exceeded this target, reaching 16,747 unique beneficiaries.

The Skilling for Change programme provides financial literacy and business skills training to women in Rwanda within two distinct workstreams:

- The Financial Literacy programme, which delivers training in financial literacy and investment readiness through CARE International's existing Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) network. To date, this programme has exceeded its targets, by reaching 16,146 Rwandan women (target 15,000).
- The Business Training and Incubation programme provides tailored and intensive support to selected high performing women entrepreneurs; to date, this workstream has also exceed targets by providing business incubation to 159 high performing Rwandan women entrepreneurs (target 150) and face-to-face mentoring for 80 high performing Rwandan women entrepreneurs (target 75).

Skilling for Change also works within the context of CBFW's global mentoring platform, which matches mentees with suitable mentors for virtual guidance and support, and also provides webinars and video modules. The extension of this platform has reached 601 mentees from 41 countries, including 60 from Rwanda.

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation assesses the Skilling for Change project according to the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. It also considers learning questions related to the ongoing development and expansion of the programme.

The research comprised a review of programme documentation; a literature review; interviews, focus groups and participatory workshops with programme participants; interviews with indirect beneficiaries; interviews with the programme team and implementing partners; and additional case study interviews within the final reporting and analysis phase. Data collected for this evaluation was analysed in order to understand the extent to which the Skilling for Change project has met its strategic objectives, and to provide key insights and best practice recommendations for the further development of the project model. Emerging findings were tested in two final participatory workshops with beneficiaries.

Our key research questions were as follows:

Dimension	Key Research Questions
Relevance	How far is the programme perceived as being relevant to beneficiary and local needs?
Effectiveness	To what extent have the project objectives/outcomes been achieved?
Impact	How, when, and for whom did the project make a difference? How significant was this difference?
	Did project outcomes also extend to indirect beneficiaries? What was this impact, and how significant was it?
	Was there any unintended impact?

¹ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.ppxt

Dimension	Key Research Questions
Efficiency	Were project outputs delivered in accordance with the project plan and logframe?
	To what extent were activities cost-efficient?
Sustainability	What components of the methodologies and approaches can be used to maintain changes going forward?
Learning	How did the combination of investment readiness, financial literacy, business training and incubation in Rwanda contribute to the project outcomes?
	What was the most effective and sustainable model for connecting women entrepreneurs to financing services?
	What were the most effective methodologies and approaches used to bring about changes to people's lives?
	What were the reasons behind lack of success of the mobile learning solution, and what lessons can be learned for future programming?
	What else has worked and what has not? What lessons have been learned?

Our approach aimed to be highly participatory and to meet the needs of beneficiaries; as such pre-study consultation was conducted to inform the development of research tools, and participatory workshops were also held to ensure that beneficiaries could consider and feed into the key findings.

Ten early career Rwandan researchers were selected from a pool of 266 applicants to conduct the field research. All selected researchers were currently studying for, or had recently completed, a postgraduate qualification and had experience in conducting research interviews. They had a strong understanding of research ethics, and fluency in both English and Kinyarwanda.

2.3 Key Findings

Relevance

- The Skilling for Change programme was developed with a clear understanding and assessment of the needs of the beneficiary group; it is evident that the training programme was designed to address these needs.

Effectiveness

- 64% of women entrepreneurs improved their skills over the course of the programme, narrowly missing the target of 70%. It is worth noting that endline respondents can often rate their skills as being lower than at the start of training programmes, however, when they are aware of how much they do not know.
- 26% of women gained access to formal finance through participation in the programme, well exceeding the target of 10%.
- A retrospective question on business revenue showed that 96% of participants had sustained or increased their business revenue over the course of the programme; it must be noted, however, that this result is likely to have a strong positive bias.
- The target for sustaining or increasing the number of employees has been met, but there are issues with the metric (which would allow a significant net fall in employment).

Impact

Business Skills

- Participants' rating of their own business skills improved over the course of the programme, particularly their perceptions of their abilities as a business person (an increase of 29%). It is notable that those with

higher levels of education had greater confidence than those with education at primary level and below.

- Participants showed clear improvement across all five areas of financial knowledge, with the greatest change occurring in women's ability to identify the advantages and disadvantages of different savings products (an increase of 68%). Those who had been in the more intensive training groups also rated their financial knowledge more highly than those in the general group, although this may be due to selection bias.
- In terms of financial skills, participants showed improvement of between 20% and 27% across all six areas under consideration; the highest increase was in people's confidence in being able to secure a loan when required.
- Positive change was also seen in all six dimensions of enterprise skills, with the most marked change occurring in women's confidence to build business relationships (an increase of 57%). Clear changes also occurred to women's confidence in applying business skills in the workplace (45%) and use of their business skills to influence others (42%). These changes were more positive overall for women receiving intensive training than for those in the mainstream training group.

Business Growth

- Women who previously owned multiple businesses have focused on those which are most successful, leading to streamlining in the overall number of businesses.
- Retrospective feedback indicates that 92% of participants' business revenue had increased since training; 91% of respondents also reported increased profits retrospectively, which comparisons of baseline and endline data suggested increased from an average of RWF 93,123 to RWF 108,988.²
- There is conflicting evidence on employment levels; the best available evidence points towards a net increase in the number of employees.
- 38% of women reported having diversified their business since the training occurred. Those receiving intensive training were more likely to have diversified than those in the mainstream group, as were those with higher levels of education.
- 85% of women agreed or strongly agreed that individual loans had helped them to develop their business; 92% of those receiving group loans responded similarly. Women recognise the value of loans in ensuring longer term profit. However, the data implies that women are replacing savings investment with investment from loans; this may have negative consequences longer term when interest is taken into account.
- Almost all those receiving intensive training reported an increase in their business investment levels since the training; 77% of those in the mainstream group also reported an increase. Nearly 60% of participants felt that the level of investment in their business was about right.

Women's Economic Empowerment

- Female entrepreneurship has been positively affected by Skilling for Change, with confidence and skills in entrepreneurial activities increasing. A small minority of women struggled to turn a profit; it was felt, however, that in cases where profit had not been achieved, the training had given beneficiaries the tools to do so in future.
- Skilling for Change has also had a positive impact on financial inclusion, with women increasing their access to and use of a variety of financial services. This is particularly true of loans.
- The financial situation for families and individuals improved dramatically over the course of the programme: families' financial situations improved by a mean of 33%, and individual situations improved by a mean of 110%. Learning to save, and understanding how to manage and repay small loans, were cited as being central to this improvement.
- Qualitative evidence supports a strong positive effect on decision making for women. Household decision making, which previously tended to be the preserve of men, is now more shared, and money that was

² USD 117.43 to USD 137.44 (xe.com, 11/08/2016)

previously being spent by men on beer or tobacco is instead going into VSLAs.

- Greater trust in women by their husbands, and support for their decisions, has been a key impact of Skilling for Change. This was enhanced by men's involvement in the training.
- Participants reported improved leadership abilities following the training, with some respondents sharing knowledge with family and community members. Some also reported that they had informally started to mentor other, less experienced, entrepreneurs and to give advice to start-ups.
- A number of women found it challenging to participate in training, manage their businesses and still fulfil their household duties; some respondents reported their spouses as helping in the home or in the business to manage the workload.

Global Mentoring Component

- 90% of those participating in the online mentoring component reported the impact as being positive or very positive.
- Sharing knowledge and learning from the mentor were the areas where greatest achievement was perceived by mentees; the area of least achievement was in improving mentees' financial knowledge and understanding of funding options.
- The greatest area of skills development for mentees was in strategy and management, although progress was evident in all dimensions.

Indirect and Unanticipated Impact

- The majority of participants' spouses were supportive of their involvement in the programme, although a small number were only persuaded once they were made aware of the benefits for the whole household. Some respondents, although a minority, experienced opposition and/or verbal abuse from their husbands as a result of their participation.
- Positive impact was reported for indirect beneficiaries as a result of the programme, including strong improvement for families in the areas of health and education, household resources (including livestock) and household relations.
- At community level, positive impacts were also reported as resulting from the programme. These impacts included reduced levels of poverty and the ability of the trained women to act as role models and mentors for community members wishing to start up businesses.
- The management of VSLAs was reported to have improved as an indirect benefit of the programme, as a result of better business knowledge and practices.

Efficiency

- The programme was successful in meeting all its targets in terms of recruitment and participation. This was the case for all four strands: online mentoring, financial literacy training, tailored training and business incubation/coaching.
- The programme design and delivery have been cost efficient, with success partly being due the model of building on existing structures (VSLAs). Budgets have been well managed and procurement processes are both thorough and ethical.

Sustainability

- Stakeholders believe that the programme can be both expanded in Rwanda and rolled out in other countries; there are elements of the design, however, which need amending in order to maximise the programme's success.
- Greater training and support for in-country partners will also be key for future programme sustainability, along with more rigorous quality assurance to check that implementation is in accordance with programme design.
- Ongoing support or training, building on what has already been delivered (including recaps of training

content) would enable women to continue realising the benefits of their training. Sustainability will also be improved once the mobile loan solution has been developed to a point where it can be implemented effectively.

2.4 Recommendations

Programme Design

- **Streamlining and simplifying the training model:** While there may be an element of selection bias, it does appear that women from the more intensive programme benefited more from the training outcomes; it may be worthwhile for the programme, in future iterations, to streamline and simplify its model so that more women are able to benefit from this intensive training.
- **Introducing a cascade model of peer training:** In the same way, it may be more cost effective over time for the general training programme to be developed further into a cascade model of peer training. This would allow resources to be focused on areas where greatest impact may be achieved, through more intensive training.
- **Prioritising businesses with employment potential:** Greater attention could be given to selecting individuals with high growth or high growth potential businesses for more intensive levels of programme support, while continuing to ensure that these are businesses which also have potential for employment (and therefore community impact).
- **Ensuring targets have conceptual clarity and coherence:** Targets should be checked for conceptual coherence, and also for whether or not they realistically capture data which would have a positive benefit. One of the targets, for example, would require a significant net fall in employment levels for the minimum level to be met. A detailed review of intended community impact and expectations before developing targets would help to avoid this in future.
- **Investigating the benefits of including men in training:** It is worth CBFW considering the involvement of men in training in other places in which gender disparity is high; in Rwanda, it had the effect of increasing men's support for their partners' businesses and decision making.

Programme Delivery and Content

- **Increasing training and support for delivery partners:** Despite the programme focusing on women's economic empowerment, training was also delivered to men in some VSLAs. Further, there was anecdotal evidence that training sessions were not always delivered to specification, with some beneficiaries only receiving one day's training. It is hard for the Foundation to monitor these implementation issues from a distance. We therefore recommend more training and support for local partners, along with rigorous and ongoing quality assurance in project delivery.
- **Increasing levels of support for those with lower education levels:** Certain groups may require greater support from the programme in order to realise benefits. Those with lower levels of education, for example, tended to have poorer outcomes; these groups should be prioritised in terms of training and support in order to ensure greater impact across the whole community.
- **Providing advice to mitigate climate change impact:** Participants with agricultural businesses may benefit from technical and financial advice to help mitigate against the impact of climate and poor harvests, for example, greater knowledge of financial products related to crop insurance may help women better protect their businesses and ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Tailoring training content to ensure outcomes are met:** It would be valuable for the Foundation to review other areas of knowledge, skills and confidence for which outcomes were comparatively lower than others (for example, knowledge and skills to identify and select business opportunities), and to compare these against its aspirations for the programme. For areas of importance, it would be worth ensuring that greater focus is made in training content.

- **Ensuring clear distinctions between programmes:** There was insufficient distinction made between the training programme and the general work of CARE and the VSLAs; respondents were not always able to identify changes resulting from the Skilling for Change programme. Greater focus on ensuring that participants understand the distinctions between different programmes and activities may result in impact being more accurately attributed to its source.
- **Ensuring clarity of language in training manuals:** Overly complex terminology in some training manuals and research tools may have confused some participants; there is some evidence that terms such as 'profit' were not fully understood. Ensuring that the training manuals are clear and that language used is appropriate to local contexts is critical.
- **Conducting context-specific assessments of financial solutions:** Context-specific assessment should be made of the value of loans to particular businesses, set against local interest rates. In some cases, where savings investment would otherwise be replaced by loans investment, the status quo may be preferable.
- **Delivering comprehensive needs assessments:** Relating to context, the Foundation may want to consider a detailed needs assessment in new countries/districts for programming in order to ensure that it is appropriate; spousal reaction to women's empowerment could be considered, for example, and additional support for how to mitigate negative reactions given in areas of need.

3. Overview

3.1 Programme Overview

Established in 2014, Skilling for Change is a two-year project that aims ‘to promote the long-term economic independence of up to 15,600 women entrepreneurs by developing the key skills they need to grow their businesses’.³ The project is an initiative of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women (CBFW),⁴ delivered in partnership with CARE International and with the support of Accenture, as part of the latter’s global corporate citizenship agenda, Skills to Succeed.⁵

Based on project documentation, the following assumptions have guided project design and delivery:

- ‘Entrepreneurship promotion is an effective means to empower women and create employment; leading to women becoming more empowered in the family and wider community. This is seen through some women who are being elected to represent others as result of being entrepreneurs’.⁶
- The Skilling for Change initiative ‘is unique in addressing skilling needs of women entrepreneurs in a tailored way, according to maturity of their businesses, their ICT skills, and in their local language’.⁷

During the current two year cycle, the Skilling for Change project has reached 16,747 unique beneficiaries, exceeding its original target of 15,600.⁸

3.1.1 Financial Literacy, Business Training & Incubation in Rwanda

Programme Design

The principal focus of the Skilling for Change project is to provide financial literacy and business skills training to women in Rwanda through two interlinked in-country programmes:⁹

- The Financial Literacy programme has delivered financial literacy and investment readiness training to 16,146 Rwandan women (target 15,000).
- The Business Training and Incubation programme has provided business incubation to 159 high performing Rwandan women entrepreneurs (target 150) and face-to-face mentoring for 80 high performing Rwandan women entrepreneurs (target 75). The programme has also facilitated access to Women’s Guarantee Fund and other financial products.

The Financial Literacy programme was initially developed alongside a Mobile Loan Solution (MLS) initiative to provide mobile money products to project participants. This element of the programme is currently under revision following challenges in the implementation phase.¹⁰

Delivery

Financial literacy and investment readiness training modules were delivered by Village Agents and local training partners, who were trained by the CARE programme team using a cascade ‘Train the Trainer’ model. Training manuals provided Village Agents with an overview of the objectives, mode and content for training modules. Where appropriate, manuals were adapted to the country context and translated into Kinyarwanda to ensure accessibility.¹¹ Training sessions were held at the same time as weekly Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) meetings; sessions were delivered over eight weeks for the the financial

³ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

⁴ <http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org/skilling-for-change-in-rwanda/>

⁵ <https://www.accenture.com/ch-en/company-skills-succeed>

⁶ CARE Narrative Report Year 1 FINAL

⁷ S4C Original Proposal

⁸ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

⁹ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

¹⁰ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

¹¹ Skilling for Change Training Approach_241014

literacy course and six weeks for the investment readiness course.¹² Modules covered across both courses include starting and growing a business, planning and budgeting money, saving and reinvesting in a business, and making appropriate choices when accessing financial services.¹³

Further intensive business training was provided to a subset of 159 selected participants during a four day workshop. Training focused on gender and entrepreneurship, strategic planning, marketing, financial management, the business regulatory environment, and action planning.¹⁴ The topics (and the accompanying manual) were based on modules from the International Labour Organisation enterprise manual and the CARE Advanced Business Training manual.¹⁵

Mentoring partnerships provided further face-to-face business incubation for 80 women entrepreneurs drawn from the cohort of high performing women entrepreneurs. Mentoring relationships provided targeted business incubation over a minimum of six months.¹⁶ Delivery partners also set their own objectives, such as supporting women to develop formal business growth plans, to register their business and to reach self-identified benchmarks;¹⁷ it should be noted, however, these objectives were not necessarily shared more broadly.¹⁸

Mentors were identified with the assistance of the RCWE and matched according to sector.¹⁹ Mentees were also required to pay RFW 1,500 to the RCWE as '*an indicator of their commitment*' to the programme and as a contribution to running costs.²⁰

Participant Selection

The financial literacy component was delivered in two districts of Northern Rwanda, namely Rulindo and Gicumbi, to selected women from established CARE VSLAs.²¹ The Skilling for Change project recruited participants from mature VSLAs in which women form at least 75% of the group membership and operate their own businesses or incomes generating activities, and where the group as a whole has completed at least one cycle of VSLA activities. The selection criteria also required that group members were '*ready for financial linkage to formal financial institutes*', had previously completed CARE Rwanda's basic VSLA and financial training, and were keen to participate in further training on financial literacy and investment readiness.²²

The selection for further intensive business training for a minimum of 150 women entrepreneurs was based on an Enterprise Profile Mapping tool, pre-defined criteria including single ownership business operation at a micro level in specific growth sectors, and an on-site visit during which a financial performance tool assessed potential for further business growth.²³ Assessment was made of current business plans and strategies, resources and finance, and overall attitude to business development.²⁴ Selection for further mentoring of a minimum of 75 high level women entrepreneurs was based on identifying women with the strongest business ideas during intensive business training.²⁵

¹² Skilling for Change Training Approach_241014

¹³ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

¹⁴ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

¹⁵ Skilling for Change Training Approach_241014

¹⁶ CARE Narrative Report Year I FINAL

¹⁷ RCWE: Mentorship with 75 women

¹⁸ CARE did not recognise this objective of RCWE in its own objectives of the mentoring programme (feedback from CARE on draft evaluation report, August 2016).

¹⁹ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

²⁰ RCWE: Mentorship with 75 women

²¹ While these VSLAs have a self-selected membership, CARE has specifically targeted communities with limited access to financial services, typically poorer rural areas. CARE also encourage a majority of women in groups based on their experience of factors that support successful VSLAs.

²² Skilling for Change Training Approach_241014

²³ CARE Narrative Report Year I FINAL

²⁴ Selection of High Potential Entrepreneurs - Mentorship Phase Final Version

²⁵ CARE Narrative Report Year I FINAL

3.1.2 Global Mentoring Platform Expansion

Skilling for Change's in-country initiatives have been developed alongside the expansion of CBFW's global mentoring platform.²⁶ This includes:

- A new cohort of 601 mentees (target 600) from 41 different countries have been recruited, trained and matched with mentors. 60 mentees were from Rwanda (target 50).²⁷
- New webinars and video modules have been developed as part of the programme expansion. The team collaborated with Accenture on the planning and delivery of the webinar series.²⁸

3.2 Evaluation Overview

This evaluation assesses the Skilling for Change project for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. It also considers various learning questions, together with lessons for the replication and expansion of the project model both within and beyond Rwanda.

The research comprised a review of programme documentation; a literature review; interviews, focus groups and participatory workshops with programme participants; interviews with indirect beneficiaries; interviews with the programme team and implementing partners; and additional case study interviews within the final reporting and analysis phase. Data collected for this evaluation was analysed in order to understand the extent to which the Skilling for Change project has met its strategic objectives, and to provide key insights and best practice recommendations for the further development of the project model. Emerging findings were tested in two final participatory workshops with beneficiaries.

3.2.1 Overview of Method

Evaluation Framework

Our work was developed in accordance with an overarching evaluation framework, attached as an appendix to this document. This framework was designed so that the research tools address key areas of enquiry, and ensure that a comprehensive approach is applied across the whole project. The primary criteria used as the foundation for the framework are the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability; the 'learning' dimension allowed key programmatic learnings to be identified and shared.

Within the framework, the key research questions were as follows:

Dimension	Key Research Questions
Relevance	How far is the programme perceived as being relevant to beneficiary and local needs?
Effectiveness	To what extent have the project objectives/outcomes been achieved?
Impact	How, when, and for whom did the project make a difference? How significant was this difference?
	Did project outcomes also extend to indirect beneficiaries? What was this impact, and how significant was it?
	Was there any unintended impact?
Efficiency	Were project outputs delivered in accordance with the project plan and logframe?
	To what extent were activities cost-efficient?
Sustainability	What components of the methodologies and approaches can be used to maintain changes going forward?

²⁶ <http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org/programmes/mentoring/>

²⁷ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

²⁸ Feedback from CBFW on the draft evaluation report (August 2016).

Dimension	Key Research Questions
Learning	How did the combination of investment readiness, financial literacy, business training and incubation in Rwanda contribute to the project outcomes?
	What was the most effective and sustainable model for connecting women entrepreneurs to financing services?
	What were the most effective methodologies and approaches used to bring about changes to people's lives?
	What were the reasons behind lack of success of the mobile learning solution, and what lessons can be learned for future programming?
	What else has worked and what has not? What lessons have been learned?

Participatory Research

Our approach aimed to meet the needs of beneficiaries, both in terms of how the research was conducted and also the final output. The evaluation therefore included an inception field trip focused on consultation with beneficiaries and local programme staff members.

Key findings from the fieldwork, which were incorporated into the evaluation toolkit, were as follows:

- Beneficiaries offered several ideas for making the research sensitive and easy for respondents. These included providing advanced notice of the visit by phone (a day or two in advance); not scheduling the research for market days; and otherwise being flexible around the need for interviewees to continue business operations. If possible, interviews scheduled for early in the day were thought to be less interruptive for those who need to go to market.
- Participants were not familiar with many of the concepts used in evaluation; introductions to the interviews therefore made clear why the research is being done and clarified any technical terms.
- There was a strong appetite for learning evaluation findings in some form. All participants said that they would like to learn the report's findings, either through a meeting or report.
- Beneficiaries are likely to be more interested in learning about the most successful women who participated in the programme than the general evaluation findings. Interviewees were particularly interested in knowing which products and strategies the most successful entrepreneurs had used, and how and why the women became successful.

Local Research Consultants

Ten early career Rwandan researchers were selected from a pool of 266 applicants to conduct the field research. All selected researchers were currently studying for, or had recently completed, a postgraduate qualification and had experience in conducting research interviews. They had a strong understanding of research ethics, and fluency in both English and Kinyarwanda.

Training for the local research team included capacity building on research methods and ethics, as well as the specifics of data collection for this evaluation. Ongoing quality assurance consisted of spot checks to assess the integrity and consistency of data, as well as a daily check-ins using WhatsApp. Two local researchers served as team leaders, with responsibility for delivering on-going feedback on research delivery.

3.2.2 Desk Review

The desk research phase encompassed a document review and a literature review, and had two primary aims: to inform the development of the research toolkit, and to situate the programme contextually.

Document Review

Existing programme documentation was reviewed with particular attention paid to programme objectives,

inputs and intended impact; baseline survey indicators and data were also reviewed at this stage, so as to ensure that the proposed endline toolkit was complementary. A second stage of the document review was held at the mid-point of the project to ensure that relevant documentation had been reflected in the analysis and key findings.

Literature Review

A literature review was undertaken at project inception to review research related to women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in Rwanda. The review sought to identify barriers that women face in business, entrepreneurship, and access to financial services, as well as mechanisms for sustainable development. In addition to published literature, similar projects and good practice related to women's economic empowerment and/or access to financial institutions were also reviewed.

3.2.3 Data Collection

Focus Groups and Participatory Workshops

The focus group materials were piloted as part of the training, following a participatory workshop with local researchers on effective facilitation. Two further participatory workshops were held with beneficiaries at the end of the project to share research findings and gather beneficiary feedback.

Five focus groups were conducted during the fieldwork phase by local researchers. Programme beneficiaries discussed their experiences and shared their learnings. The group discussions lasted for 60-90 minutes, and were simultaneously annotated for analysis purposes.

Surveys

In-person surveys were conducted with 628 women receiving investment readiness and financial literacy training, including high performing women entrepreneurs receiving business incubation and one-to-one mentoring. The purpose of the survey was to establish the extent to which the programme has achieved its objectives amongst direct beneficiaries, as well as understanding any wider or unintended impact that has resulted from the programme for direct and/or indirect beneficiaries.

The surveys included a combination of open-ended and closed questions to enable qualitative and quantitative information to be collected. The survey questions, for the most part, reflect those asked in the baseline survey, in order for the distance travelled between baseline and endline to be tracked and, where possible, for net impact to be attributed.

Sampling

It was decided not to reinterview exactly the same group as for the baseline, due to (a) complexities in recruitment and (b) likely significant attrition between the baseline and the endline, meaning a much smaller potential pool of respondents. In order to map similar individuals between the baseline and the endline, it was decided instead to interview participants from the same 70 VSLAs as for the baseline (random sampling) and to weight the data during the analysis phase according to areas to be agreed later; please see limitations section for further expansion on this point. Priority was given to those who participated in the baseline study; gaps were filled through random sampling.

Interviews

In-depth interviews addressed key evaluation questions with two sets of interviewees: programme team members and implementing partners, and indirect beneficiaries. The core research team conducted phone interviews with ten programme team members and implementing partners. The purpose of these interviews was to explore internal perceptions of programme design and implementation, as well as insights and lessons learned that may inform the future expansion of the programme.

Our trained local researchers also conducted face-to-face interviews with 20 indirect beneficiaries; 18 were married to women entrepreneurs that had received training, while two belonged to communities in which women were trained. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the wider network of impact created

by the programme outside of direct beneficiaries.

End of Project Participatory Workshops

Two participatory workshops were run with women at the end of the evaluation to test emerging findings. The outcomes of the workshop have been incorporated into this final evaluation report.

3.2.4 Analysis

Quantitative data was cleaned and recoded. Where estimates were given between two points, the average was taken (and rounded where necessary). In some cases, qualitative information given in 'other' responses were recoded into new quantitative categories (e.g. 'single mother' under marital status); other qualitative responses were recoded where they fitted better under existing quantitative categories.²⁹

Three groups were also recoded to simplify statistical testing when looking at differences between groups: marital status into single/married; training group into broader/more intensive support; and education level into primary/below and secondary/TVET. T tests and chi squared tests were used to test for statistically significant differences in outcomes between these groups, and also (for relevant indicators) for business owners compared to others. These differences have been included in the report where p was less than or equal to 0.05.

Qualitative data was examined for themes, patterns and points of difference. Information from the various strands was entered into an analysis matrix and triangulated.

Global Mentoring Component

The Foundation holds internal monitoring data on the online mentoring component, which we recoded and analysed for this evaluation. Where currency had not been automatically converted, calculations were made (conversions were correct as of 27 July 2016). Comparative revenue data was only included where it was captured both at the baseline and the endline. A significant amount of work was needed to clean the dataset ready for analysis; we therefore focused only on key indicators.

3.3 Limitations

Data weighting and comparability issues

Two issues with data weighting arose when we tried to weight the endline data. Our original intention was to map both baseline data and endline data onto population characteristics (i.e. those associated with the total training population of 15,000 women). This was not possible, as records were not kept of demographic data associated with the 15,000 women involved in the training; this data is only held about all women involved in VSLAs.

There were also various issues with the baseline survey data which meant that comparability with the endline data was limited. The baseline survey data, to which we had access only once the data collection was underway, deviated from the baseline questionnaire (which had been used as a basis for the endless questionnaire design). This had two major impacts:

1. Endline findings could not be weighted to match the profile of the baseline survey participants as planned, due to an absence of any demographic information in the baseline data file. This is a major limitation and means that we cannot be confident that the two survey groups are well matched in terms of profile.
2. Some key questions (e.g. on business revenue) were not comparable between the baseline and the endline surveys, and had to be excluded from the analysis. Others had to be calculated from sub-questions which were asked; where questions were not asked in the same way, respondents may have answered differently than they would otherwise have done.

²⁹ Data under qualitative responses was also recoded for education level to include those who had participated in, but not completed, the relevant level of education.

Prioritisation of those who took place in the baseline study, combined with random sampling for the rest, should have helped to address issues with the lack of weighting, although there are two potential issues here. The first is that we do not know exactly how the sampling for the baseline data collection took place; the second is that recommended random sampling protocol does not appear to have been followed by Village Agents (who recruited participants) during the endline data collection. However, over 600 people were sampled for each stage; for the population size of 15,000, this is almost double what would reasonably be needed for a random sample, which increases the likelihood that the groups are comparable. There are some areas where quantitative and qualitative findings conflict; in these cases, we have tested the findings further in the participatory workshops to identify which is more likely to be correct.

Programme confusion among participants

Many of the research participants were unable to distinguish between the Skilling for Change programme and their membership of VSLAs, with the associated activities run by CARE. As such, some of the areas of impact identified in this report may be as a result of broader programming.

Question confusion among participants

In the initial participatory workshops, we noted that clarity and simplicity of language in questioning would be key, in part due to low levels of literacy among participants. We were unable, however, to change the format of questions asked in the baseline survey, as otherwise the endline questions would not necessarily have been measuring the same aspects as those in the baseline. While researchers did their best to explain questions further where necessary, it is therefore possible that some questions were not fully understood by participants.

There were some areas where participants were unfamiliar with the terminology used; in many areas, this was addressed by the research team by giving detailed explanations of terms used, but this did not cover other issues which may, on the face of it, have appeared to be more straightforward. There is evidence to suggest, for example, that a lot of participants may not have understood 'profit' fully; there were many responses where profit and revenue figures were the same. Misconceptions around profit were also evident in the participatory workshops that took place at the end of the evaluation. Some participants, for example, observed that alternate use of funds from the business (use of money to solve short-term financial problems such as school fees) may be a reason for low profitability.³⁰ Profit data may therefore be misleading.

Selection bias in training group

Individuals selected for more intensive programme support are those who have greater skills, confidence and growth potential; any greater impact identified for these groups may therefore be caused by selection bias rather than greater programme impact. There was no information in the baseline data on training group, so changes across the course of the programme cannot be compared to address this gap.

Seasonal differences in data collection periods

The baseline research took place in February/March, and the endline research in July. Those women who run agricultural businesses are affected by seasons, and many find the long dry season (into which July falls) particularly challenging in terms of revenue, profits and business success. While revenue and profit questions were asked on an annual basis, women may have responded more negatively to other areas given seasonal challenges.

Global Mentoring Component data

There were two key limitations of the online mentoring data. The first was that data was captured internally by the Foundation, which may have led to people being more positive than they would have been had they been assured of anonymity. The second is that scale questions were asked on a four point scale, with one

³⁰ This was made in the sense that this money did not count as profit, not that taking money out short-term would lead to longer term profitability issues.

option for a negative response and two for a positive response (with one for a neutral); this gives respondents less room for negative input, and contrasts with the five point scale used in the primary research conducted for this project.

4. Relevance

Key Findings

- Despite a number of initiatives that have been introduced in Rwanda in the last decade to support women's economic empowerment, financial and non-financial barriers still exist in accessing finance, particularly for women.
- Women entrepreneurs attending the training hoped to overcome these barriers and increase their business skills, business profitability, financial inclusion, household finances and management, financial support and confidence.
- The majority of these women's expectations were met, particularly in terms of increased business skills and their ability to evaluate risk, manage loans and balance household finances better. Not all respondents, however, felt they were able to implement what they had learned.
- Some women attending the training were expecting to receive direct financial support from the training; these women did not therefore feel that their expectations had been met.

In order to assess the relevance of the Skilling for Change programme, it was necessary to understand the context of women's economic empowerment in Rwanda, the self-perceived needs of programme beneficiaries, and the extent to which the programme's design and content met these expectations.

4.1 Women's Economic Empowerment in Rwanda

The legal framework to achieve gender equality and promote female employment and entrepreneurship in Rwanda has developed rapidly over the past decade, accompanied by a clear political will to see changes implemented at national, community and individual levels. National policies that specifically target female economic empowerment and poverty reduction as a core element in achieving sustainable development include Vision 2020, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) and the 2010 National Gender Policy.³¹ Initiatives identified in the literature review that have supported women's economic empowerment include:

- **Umurenge SACCOs:** The government-sponsored Umurenge savings and credit co-operative (SACCO) programme means that 90% of Rwandans now live within five kilometres of a credit cooperative or micro-finance initiative.³² The Government has also developed a financial inclusion programme to tackle both the financial and non-financial barriers experienced by women and other vulnerable groups in accessing formal financial services.³³ Despite these advances, a recent study found that local SACCO agents need further training to make appropriate risk calculations in approving loans (rather than restricting loans out of excessive caution), and that members need greater encouragement to deposit sufficient savings to create the capital for loans. The study also suggests that women are more likely to benefit when SACCOs operate according to the '*solidarity group*' principle, whereby members recognise the value of encouraging the poorest (typically women) to join the SACCO collective and support them

³¹ Rugege, S. (2015). 'Women and Poverty in Rwanda: The Respective Roles of Courts and Policy'. Working Paper No. 1. Oxford Human Rights Hub, University of Oxford. Accessed via: <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/OxHRH-Working-Paper-Number-1-Rugege1.pdf>

³² Alliance for Financial Inclusion (2014). 'Rwanda's Financial Inclusion Success Story: Umurenge SACCOs'. Accessed via: http://www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/afi_case_study_rwanda_finalweb.pdf

³³ Ministry in Charge of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF). 'Women and Youth Access to Finance Program'. Accessed via: http://www.migeprof.gov.rw/uploads/media/Women_and_Youth_Access_to_Finance_Program_English_Version.pdf

to access products and services as a *'mechanism of economic efficiency and social justice'*.³⁴

- **Financial inclusion:** Further activities that have supported financial inclusion in Rwanda consist of the expansion of bank and micro-finance branches, the introduction of banking agents, and greater financial access through mobile banking, mobile money and ATMs.³⁵ Diversification within the financial sector has had a direct impact on the number of *'financially included'* Rwandans. As of 2016, 26% of adults in Rwanda are *'banked'*, 68% have accessed formal financial services, and 72% have used informal financial mechanisms. Only 11% of adults remain financially excluded. In terms of borrowing, 72% of adults have accessed loans, although a significant proportion (34%) borrow to cover living expenses. There is also a strong trend for saving; 86% of adults save money with Umurenge SACCOs and mobile savings are more popular than traditional banks. While an estimated 46% of Rwandan adults use mobile money services, further uptake is inhibited by lack of knowledge about the products and services available.³⁶

Despite these policy developments and initiatives, however, it is clear from both the available literature and the anecdotal evidence of programme beneficiaries that women in Rwanda face critical financial and non-financial barriers in accessing finance to set-up or expand business activities. The most significant barriers to women's economic empowerment include:

- **Poverty:** Women entrepreneurs identified a number of ways in which poverty makes it more difficult for them to set up successful businesses, including prohibitively high rates of interest on loans from formal financial institutions (FFIs), limited access to markets, and the tendency of women traditionally to work in agriculture and animal husbandry, resulting in low or in-kind incomes. A lack of awareness about recent changes to strengthen women's property rights also means that traditional law (according to which women cannot inherit property) remains common practice in some families and communities.³⁷
- **Access to finance:** As of 2009, 82% of women business owners were self-financing their firms, 34% had accessed bank credit and 14% had a micro-finance loan. Common barriers to accessing finance include a lack of collateral to secure loans, and perception amongst financial institutions that women are not viable business owners.³⁸ This is often compounded by low levels of financial literacy, inadequate financial products, lack of delivery models that promote financial inclusion, and limited links between banks and credit cooperatives in rural areas.³⁹ Further, when women do apply for loans, it is a requirement that their husbands support their application (a support that is often not provided), and that single women also experience gender bias in the absence of a male partner.⁴⁰
- **The informal economy:** According to the Rwandan Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs, women are less likely to register their businesses formally for tax and other purposes, especially women living in rural areas and/or with limited formal schooling. As of 2008, women-owned businesses constituted 24% of enterprises in the formal economy and 58% of enterprises in the informal economy.⁴¹ Reasons include a tendency of female entrepreneurs to experience tax rates and formal business requirements

³⁴ Derrahi, K. (2015). 'Promoting greater financial inclusion of women in Rwanda'. Rwandan Ministry of Trade and Industry, PROCASUR and IFAD. Accessed via: http://www.ruralfinanceandinvestment.org/sites/default/files/SACCOS_corp_EN_v3.pdf

³⁵ Alliance for Financial Inclusion (2014). 'Rwanda's Financial Inclusion Success Story: Umurenge SACCOs'. Accessed via: http://www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/afi_case_study_rwanda_finalweb.pdf

³⁶ FinScope (2016). 'Financial Inclusion in Rwanda 2016'. Accessed via: <http://www.statistics.gov.rw/file/4317>

³⁷ Rugege, S. (2015). 'Women and Poverty in Rwanda: The Respective Roles of Courts and Policy'. Working Paper No. 1. Oxford Human Rights Hub, University of Oxford. Accessed via: <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/OxHRH-Working-Paper-Number-1-Rugege1.pdf>

³⁸ USAID, 'Rwanda: Investing in the Empowerment of Women in Business' (2009). Accessed via: http://www.womenable.com/content/userfiles/BAH_Rwanda_finalrpt.pdf

³⁹ Alliance for Financial Inclusion (2014). 'Rwanda's Financial Inclusion Success Story: Umurenge SACCOs'. Accessed via: http://www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/afi_case_study_rwanda_finalweb.pdf

⁴⁰ Beneficiary focus groups

⁴¹ USAID, 'Rwanda: Investing in the Empowerment of Women in Business' (2009). Accessed via: http://www.womenable.com/content/userfiles/BAH_Rwanda_finalrpt.pdf

as a barrier to setting up or expanding entrepreneurial activities.⁴²

- **Market information and networking:** Women entrepreneurs have indicated a lack of information on local, national, regional and international markets, which is needed to expand their business activities and grow their firms. There is also an identified need for improved networking opportunities, and greater co-ordination between NGOs and other organisations offering entrepreneurial support for women through multi-donor mechanisms such as the existing Gender Cluster.⁴³ According to a recent study, lack of access to markets was the most commonly identified challenge to further business development by women entrepreneurs (39%), followed by high taxes (32%), lack of raw materials (21%) and lack of training (16%).⁴⁴

4.2 Meeting Beneficiary Needs

The needs assessment conducted by the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women (CBFW) at the inception phase of the project concluded that women in Rwanda typically face greater barriers to accessing finance than their male counterparts. Contributing factors include a lack of financial products tailored to the needs of rural businesswomen, absence of collateral to secure loans, and gender discrimination experienced by women in business. As such, only 16% of Rwandan borrowers are women.⁴⁵

Rwanda has the fastest growing economy in East Africa; however, rural businesswomen need business training and mobile solutions to support access to formal financial institutions in order to benefit from (and contribute to) this process of rapid economic growth. The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women and CARE Rwanda felt that they were uniquely placed to meet these needs through the Skilling for Change project, thanks to CARE's established network of VSLAs allowing the project team to reach potential participants with relative ease, and CBFW's expertise in skilling women entrepreneurs and facilitating financial access for rural businesswomen using mobile technology.⁴⁶

Women entrepreneurs identified a range of different outcomes that they hoped to gain from their involvement in the training programme.⁴⁷ These include:

- **Business skills:** Endline interviewees and focus group attendees both reported that they hoped to learn a range of skills relevant to their business needs; these include understanding savings and loans, managing finances and business accounts, making strategic investments, learning how to be an effective entrepreneur, improving customer care and extending their customer base, identifying potential markets, and building community businesses. As one focus group attendee commented, '*I needed knowledge from experienced people in order to improve my business understanding*'. There was a broad consensus amongst attendees that the training had successfully increased their business skills and knowledge.
- **Profitability:** A significant number of interviewees reported that they hoped to improve the profitability of their business through taking part in the training. One interviewee hoped that the training would help them to '*get out of poverty... and make profits*'.
- **Financial inclusion:** A small number of interviewees were keen to learn how to access loans and other services from financial institutions, as well as understanding the risks involved in taking out loans and how to manage repayments successfully. Interviewees also emphasised the potential benefits for improving the management of their community VSLA.

⁴² International Finance Corporation, 'Voices of Women Entrepreneurs in Rwanda' (2008). Accessed via: www.ifc.org

⁴³ USAID, 'Rwanda: Investing in the Empowerment of Women in Business' (2009). Accessed via: http://www.womenable.com/content/userfiles/BAH_Rwanda_finalrpt.pdf

⁴⁴ Victoire, M. and Kimemia, M. (2015) 'Women Entrepreneurs' Support Projects and Their Contribution on the Welfare of the Beneficiaries in Rwanda' in *European Journal of Academic Essays*, Vol. 2, No. 8. Accessed via: <http://euroessays.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/EJAE-362.pdf>

⁴⁵ S4C Original Proposal

⁴⁶ S4C Original Proposal

⁴⁷ Endline interviews

- **Household finances:** Participants hoped to gain a greater understanding of how to manage household finances; in particular, how to balance household income and VSLA loans in order to improve living standards and well-being for their families. According to one interviewee, *'my wish was to develop myself, my family and my children to live a good life. I also wished to give advice to my colleagues so that they can develop themselves as well.'*
- **Financial support:** A significant number of participants reported that they expected to receive financial support as a result of taking part in the training. As one interviewee explained, *'I was hoping to be trained and provided with capital because they [CARE] told us that the purpose of the training was to make us entrepreneurs.'*
- **Confidence:** Focus group attendees recognised retrospectively that the training met a need for increased confidence to pursue entrepreneurial activities. As one focus group participant observed, *'In the past, women used to be fearful about taking credit and believe that... everything should be provided by husbands. But CARE came and showed us that women can be self-reliant and that we can do something for ourselves through the VSLA group.'*

It is clear from a review of the training materials that the majority of these expectations were addressed through the training topics provided; overall, interviewees agreed, noting that their expectations had been met with respect to developing business skills, evaluating risks and managing loans, and balancing household finances to improve outcomes for the family. As one interviewee explained, the programme met her expectations because she had learnt how *'to use loans and money properly, and generate profits, so that household well-being improves'*. A small number of participants reported that while the training itself was helpful, they had not felt confident to put training advice into practice.⁴⁸

The sole divergence between beneficiary expectations and training provision concerns interviewees and focus group attendees who were expecting to receive direct financial support through the training; since these participants had misunderstood the intended outcomes of the training, they did not feel that their expectations had been met. There were also a number of interviewees who felt that the training could be longer; however, it is not clear whether these participants attended the full training programme.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Endline interviews

⁴⁹ Endline interviews; two respondents noted that their training had only lasted for one day.

5. Effectiveness

Key Findings

- 64% of women entrepreneurs improved their skills over the course of the programme, narrowly missing the target of 70%. This may be due, however, to participants over-reporting their skills before the training.
- 26% of women gained access to formal finance through participation in the programme, strongly exceeding the target of 10%.
- 96% of participants sustained or increased their business revenue over the course of the programme; it must be noted, however, that this result is likely to have a strong positive bias due to being retrospectively reported.
- The target for sustaining or increasing the number of employees has been met.
- Positive feedback was mostly given regarding the success of collaborations between national and international programme partners.

The definition of programme effectiveness, in the context of the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, is the extent to which the programme objectives have been met. The Skilling for Change programme has identified four measurable targets, proceeding from their overarching objectives; these four targets have been assessed against the quantitative evidence gathered in this research.

It should be noted that for future projects, the Foundation could consider simplifying these targets on the basis of conceptual coherence: the last three targets are a percentage of a percentage. The following sections are analysed on the basis that the intention was to give a percentage of the whole for the final three, rather than a percentage of the 70%.

Programme Objectives

- 15,000 women will be trained in financial education and enterprise development (investment readiness) and mobile loan training.
- 150 women identified as high potential entrepreneurs will receive further intensive business training.
- 75 of the 150 women with the strongest businesses will receive further intensive, targeted business incubation over twelve months, which includes one-to-one business coaching, marketing and face-to-face mentoring to enable them to advance their businesses.

Key Targets

- 70% (10,920) women entrepreneurs have demonstrably improved their skills (measured by the % of women trained).
- 10% of 10,920 women entrepreneurs in Rwanda gain access to finance.
- 60% of 10,920 women entrepreneurs are expected to sustain or increase their business revenue by the end of the two year project.
- 30% of 10,920 women entrepreneurs are expected to sustain or increase the number of employees through the growth of their businesses.

Participants must complete 85% of the training in order to be considered 'trained'.

5.1 Demand-Led Skilling

Objective 1: 70% of women entrepreneurs have demonstrably improved their skills.

Objective 1: Proportion Demonstrating Improvement of Skills



The objective that 70% of women entrepreneurs demonstrably improved their skills was narrowly missed: 64% of women improved their skills over the course of the programme.⁵⁰ It is likely that even small adjustments to programme implementation, as discussed in Section 12 on Sustainability, would enable this objective to be achieved in future iterations of the programme. It is also worth considering that, in our experience, people often rate their skills as being lower at the end of a training programme, as they have a new awareness of how much they do not know.⁵¹

5.2 Employment and Entrepreneurship Outcomes

The Skilling for Change programme team identified 66 milestone targets to track ongoing progress in meeting the programme objectives and final targets. At the end of its second year, the project had met 62 out of its 66 milestones; the milestones that remained unmet related to the Mobile Loan Solution (MLS) programme.⁵² While targets in this area have not been met, however, 1,145 women have been supported to access credit from formal lending institutions and activities in this area are expected to continue after the project formally ends.⁵³

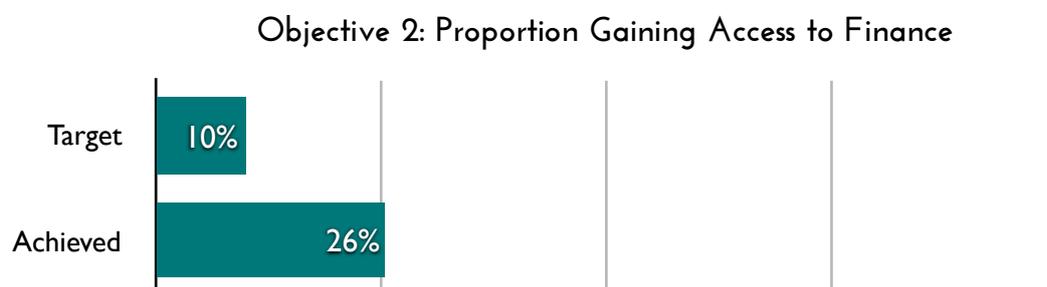
⁵⁰ This was calculated from an average of all components of business skills measured (coded BS) in both the baseline and the endline surveys.

⁵¹ It is preferable, therefore, to use data sources where assessment is more independent - the same question across two points in time - but additional weight has been attached to retrospective questioning here due to gaps in the baseline data.

⁵² CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx. It should be noted, as discussed further under section 7 on impact, that the data captured for previous internal reporting through the MIS system has considerable limitations, so the achievement of these metrics should be interpreted cautiously.

⁵³ CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

Objective 2: 10% of women entrepreneurs gain access to finance.



26% of women gained access to formal finance, as measured by changes in the proportion of women who had taken out either group or individual loans. The target of 10% was therefore exceeded by a remarkable margin of 156%.

Objective 3: 60% sustain or increase their business revenue.

Issues with the baseline revenue data, which was incomplete, meant that changes over the course of the programme could not be measured. A retrospective question on business revenue, however (please see section 6.2 for full graphs) showed that 96% of participants had sustained or increased their business revenue. This figure is self-reported and likely to be more positive than the reality for two reasons: the first is that self-reported changes are generally more positive than those measured across time, and the second is that comparisons between self-reported data on profit (which is again very positive) and baseline/endline changes conflicts substantially. It nevertheless seems reasonable to assume that the target of 60% has been met or exceeded.

Objective 4: 30% sustain or increase the number of employees.

While this objective has been met according to both baseline/endline comparisons and retrospective questioning, there is conflicting evidence on the details. Self-reported data suggests that 96% of women have sustained or increased the number of their employees, but comparisons of baseline and endline data suggest that the number of employees has fallen.

This objective, in our view, needs further consideration for future iterations of the programme: 30% sustaining or increasing the number of their employees suggests that it is acceptable for 70% of businesses to reduce the number of their employees, which would lead to a significant net fall in employment.

5.3 Collaboration

National and international programme partners reported a positive experience of working collaboratively to develop and implement the Skilling for Change programme. Stakeholder interviewees noted that each partner offered different specialisms and technical skills, some with local knowledge and others with global expertise. According to one interviewee, partners' different backgrounds meant that they were able to learn from each other across the lifecycle of the project. Partners also expressed an interest in future collaboration, in both future iterations of the current programme or newly conceived projects.

Overall, interviewees reported good relationships between partner organisations; one interviewee observed that *'there were clearly defined responsibilities for organisations with respect to project implementation together with a clear communication channel'*. While one programme partner felt that challenges were discussed and address as needed, another raised questions around the timeliness of responding to issues on the ground. Other interviewees also commented on the *'usual'* challenges around various styles of communication

across organisations, as well as different understandings of what development work entails.

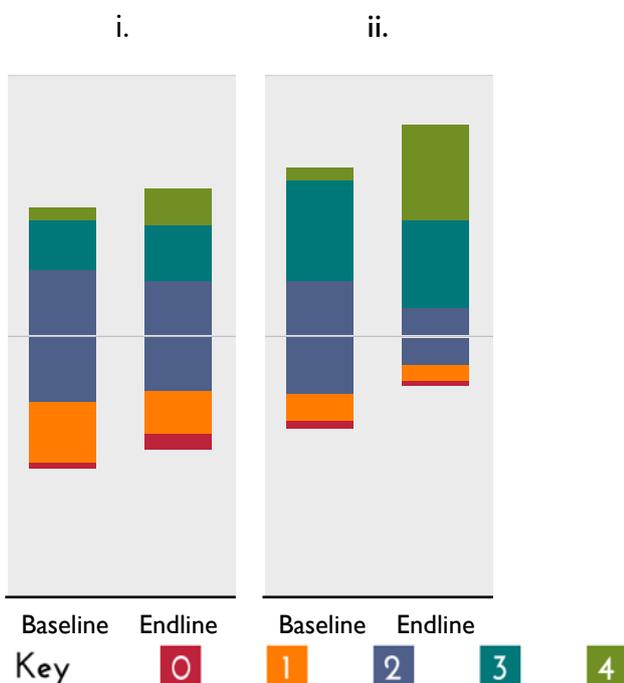
An area for possible improvement identified in stakeholder interviews was to increase further, and to make more direct, the interaction between different partners. As one interviewee explained, CBFW often acted as an intermediary between the funding partner (Accenture) and the delivery partner (CARE), while CARE UK typically took on the same intermediary role between CBFW and the local office of CARE Rwanda. This led to a number of misunderstandings that could easily be resolved through setting up a number of roundtable discussions during programme implementation to ensure that there are two-way flows of information. A number of interviewees also felt that complexities associated with the chain of communication posed challenges when dealing with the banking partner.

6. Impact on Skills and Capability

Key Findings

- Programme participants felt that their overall business skills have increased; a greater increase was observed in their levels of confidence in their business abilities than in their business skills.
- Clear improvement was apparent among participants across all five dimensions of financial knowledge measured, with the greatest change being their ability to identify advantages and disadvantages of various savings products.
- Increased financial skills were also apparent among participants across all six dimensions measured, with the highest impact on their confidence in securing loans.
- Participants' enterprise skills increased significantly, with the greatest increases being their confidence in building business relationships, applying business skills in the workplace and using their business skills to influence others.
- There has been a small increase in mobile phone ownership among participants over the course of the programme, but no increase in their confidence in using mobile phones to access formal financial services.

6.1 Business Skills



	Area	Measurement	Baseline Mean	Endline Mean	% Change
i.	Overall business skills	Strength	2.0	2.2	10%
ii.	Overall abilities as a business person	Knowledge & skills	2.3	3.0	29%

Participants' rating of their own business skills improved over the course of the programme. This was greater for their confidence levels in their overall abilities as a business person than it was for their overall business skills. Participants gave an average rating of their business skills as 2.0 out of a possible 4 at the start of the programme,⁵⁴ compared to 2.2 at the end of the programme (an increase of 10%); while average confidence levels in their overall abilities as a business person went up from 2.3 out of 4 to 3.0 (an increase of 29%).⁵⁵ Key areas of learning included the importance of maintaining good customer relations, controlling cashflow, resource management and developing small scale businesses with minimal investment.⁵⁶

Differences Between Groups

Group	Sub-Group	i.	ii.
Business ownership	Owner	2.4	3.0
	Non-owner	1.8	2.6
Training group	A	2.2	NSD
	B & C	2.8	
Education level	Primary/below	NSD	2.9
	Secondary/TVET		3.4

Tests were run on differences between groups in the endline data: marital status (married/not married),⁵⁷ business ownership (owner/non-owner), training group (Group A - the full 15,000 participants/Group B and C - mentees and coachees) and education level (primary and below/secondary and TVET):

- Business owners rated their business skills more highly than non-owners, and also had higher levels of confidence, presumably because they had more experience.⁵⁸
- Those who had received greater input from the programme, members of Group B, rated the strength of their business skills higher than those from the wider group.⁵⁹ As we highlight in the limitations section, an absence of comparable baseline data means that we cannot be sure of cause and effect here. It may be that self ratings are higher because the programme selects those who have greater skills to participate in the more intensive programme; it may be because greater contact levels engender greater business skills (or self-ratings thereof). It is likely to be a combination of both reasons.
- Those who had higher levels of education had greater confidence levels in their overall abilities as a

⁵⁴ Please see graphs above for the proportion rating these skills as strong or very strong.

⁵⁵ Numbers have been rounded for reporting throughout the report; linked percentages may therefore differ.

⁵⁶ Endline interviews

⁵⁷ No statistically significant differences were observed. Tests were run on marital status for the first ten variables and no further significant differences were found; this was excluded from the remaining analysis due to the possibility of returning a Type I error.

⁵⁸ Overall business skills rating - Business owners: 2.4. Non-business owners: 1.8. Confidence levels - Business owners: 3.0. Non-business owners - 2.6. P is less than or equal to 0.05.

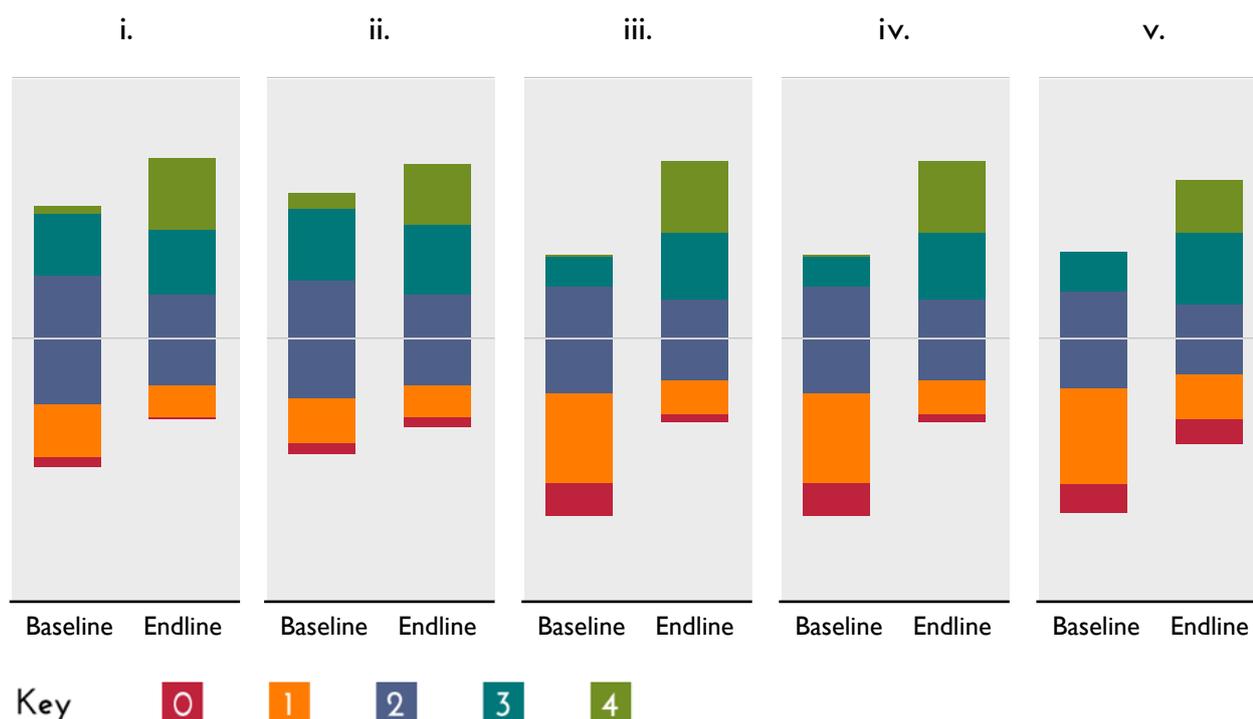
⁵⁹ Group A mean: 2.2. Group B mean: 2.8. P is less than or equal to 0.05. There were no statistically significant differences for confidence levels.

business person.⁶⁰

These findings were also reflected in qualitative endline responses with participants reporting that their business skills had improved as a result of the training. As one interviewee commented, 'I gained knowledge and skills in doing business effectively,' while another explained that she had 'learned how to run a business, which most of us did not know before'.

6.2 Financial Knowledge and Skills

6.2.1 Financial Knowledge



	Area	Measurement	Baseline Mean	Endline Mean	% Change
i.	Identifying different types of savings goals	Knowledge & skills	2.0	2.6	33%
ii.	Distinguishing between household & business expenses	Knowledge & skills	2.1	2.5	18%
iii.	Identifying advantages & disadvantages of different savings products	Knowledge & skills	1.6	2.6	68%
iv.	Knowing why & when VSLA group may need linkage with a bank	Knowledge & skills	1.5	2.3	59%
v.	Clear understanding of linkage product & processes for linkage between VSLA and a bank	Knowledge & skills	1.6	2.3	47%

Participants showed clear improvement across all five dimensions of financial knowledge measured; on average, improvements were better than most other aspects measured in the evaluation. Participants felt

⁶⁰ Primary and below mean: 2.9. Secondary/TVET mean: 3.4. P is less than or equal to 0.05. There were no statistically significant differences for ratings of business skills strength.

better able to identify different types of savings goals, to distinguish between household and business expenses, to identify the advantages and disadvantages of different savings products, to know why and when their VSLA group may need a linkage with a bank, and to have a clear understanding of the linkage product and processes for linkage between the VSLA and a bank. The greatest change was seen in people's ability to identify advantages and disadvantages of different savings products (an increase of 68% across the programme), and the smallest change in being able to distinguish between household and business expenses (an increase of 18%, albeit from a higher starting average). Qualitative endline responses also emphasised the financial benefits to participants from differentiating household and business incomes.⁶¹

Differences Between Groups

Group	Sub-Group	i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v.
Business ownership	Owner	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.5
	Non-owner	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.9
Training group	A	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.3
	B & C	3.2	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.9
Education level	Primary/below	No significant differences.				
	Secondary/TVET					

As the table above shows, business owners rated their financial knowledge more highly than those who did not own businesses across all dimensions. Those who had been in the more intensive training groups also rated their financial education skills more highly than those in the wider group. There were no statistically significant differences by education level.

Encouragement from training providers to take out loans in order to start or expand income generating activities was a key factor that led participants to take out loans with VSLAs or formal financial institutions, according to endline interview responses. As one interviewee explained, *'the trainer encouraged us to take a loan and do business, which creates hope among us'*.

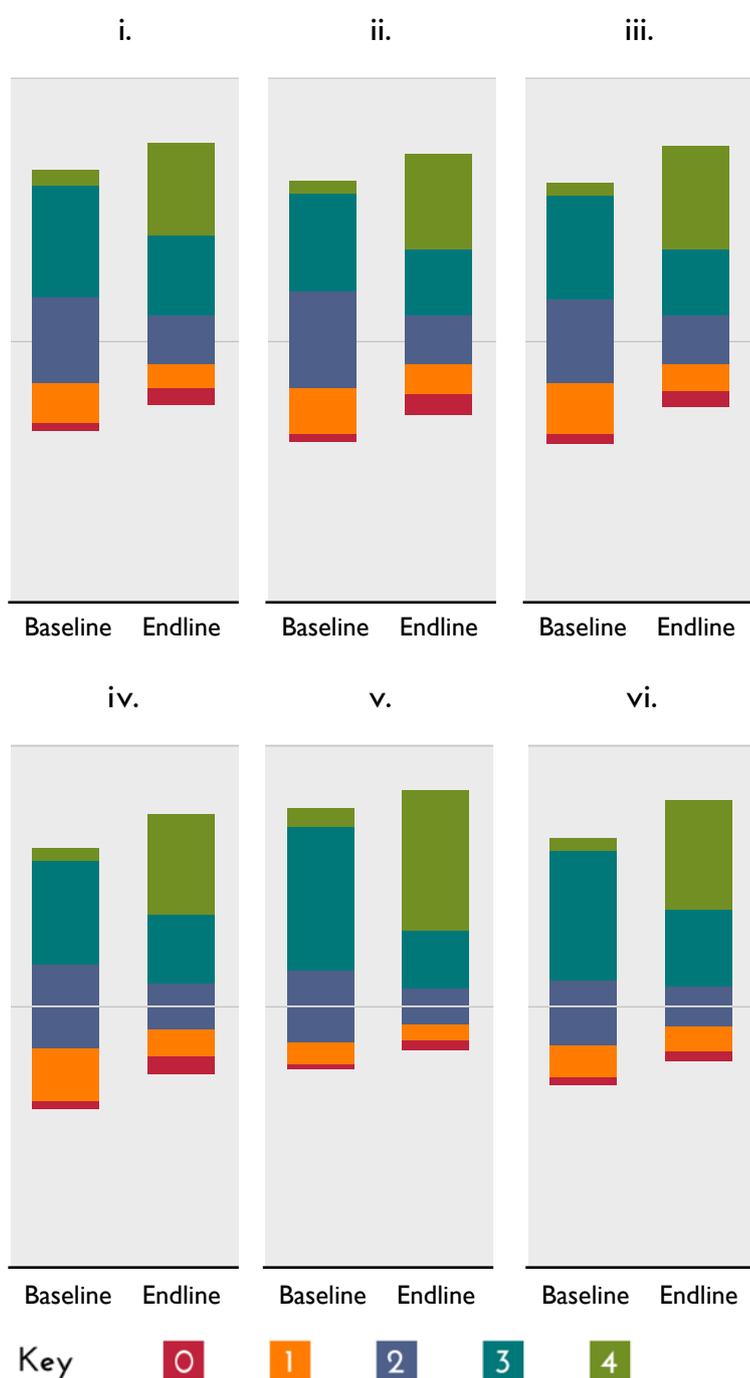
Interviewees also referred positively to knowledge gained through trainers providing them with information about different formal financial institutions, including links with Umurenge SACCOs, as well as the likely impact of age and financial means when accessing loans and services with FFIs.⁶² A number of women continued to feel, however, that accessing loans and capital to pursue business activities remained beyond their reach. As one interviewee commented, *'my belief in myself has increased, but I have no money to start up a business despite having acquired the knowledge in training'*.⁶³

⁶¹ Endline Interviews

⁶² Endline interviews

⁶³ Endline interviews

6.2.2 Financial Skills



	Area	Measurement	Baseline Mean	Endline Mean	% Change
i.	Ability of FFIs to meet financial needs of participants' businesses	Confidence	2.3	2.8	20%
ii.	Banks have participants' best interests at heart	Confidence	2.2	2.7	23%
iii.	Being able to secure a loan when participants need one	Confidence	2.2	2.8	27%

	Area	Measurement	Baseline Mean	Endline Mean	% Change
iv.	Knowing how to invest a loan in business	Confidence	2.5	3.1	22%
v.	Being able to repay a loan on time and in full	Confidence	2.6	3.2	24%
vi.	Increasing the value of subsequent loans	Confidence	2.4	3.0	23%

Financial skills increased over the course of the programme; the six dimensions measured all went up by between 20% and 27%. The highest increase was seen in people's confidence in being able to secure a loan when they need one; the smallest increase was in their confidence in the ability of FFIs to meet the needs of their businesses. CARE have suggested that they would not expect to see a significant increase here, due to the maturity of VSLA groups.⁶⁴

Differences Between Groups

Group	Sub-Group	i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v.	vi.
Business ownership	Owner	No significant differences.					
	Non-owner						
Training group	A	NSD	2.7	2.8	NSD	NSD	2.9
	B & C		3.1	3.4			3.5
Education level	Primary/below	No significant differences.					
	Secondary/TVET						
							3.4

There were no statistically significant differences by business ownership. For training group, those who had more intensive support had greater confidence than the wider group in three areas: that banks had their best interests at heart, that they could secure a loan when they needed one, and that they could increase the value of subsequent loans. Those who had more education also had greater confidence in being able to increase the value of subsequent loans (there were no statistically significant differences by education level in other areas).

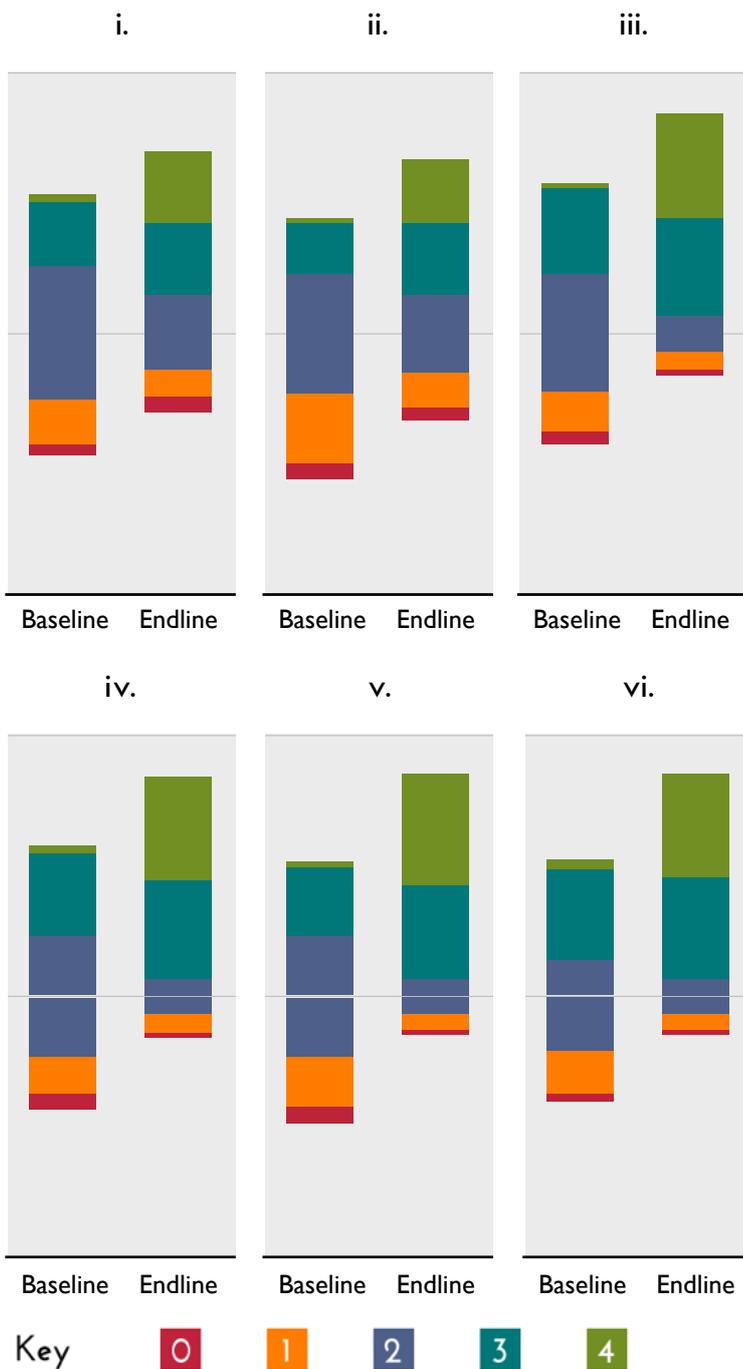
An increase in financial skills is also reflected in qualitative responses; for example, one interviewee explained that she *'did not worry about keeping notes of finances'* before the training but now confidently records and manages both her family and business income, while another interviewee explained that *'nowadays, I do my business more confidently and do everything carefully because I am aware that I could face serious problems, like bankruptcy, if I fail to pay my loan'*.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Feedback from CARE on draft evaluation report (August 2016).

⁶⁵ Endline Interviews

6.3 Enterprise Skills

Participants emphasised that key learning from the training programme focused on developing enterprise skills; a typical interviewee response explained that the training had taught them ‘how to get a loan, invest it well and make a profit from it for family development’. According to one participant, another important area of learning was that working collectively to develop business activities can produce greater results than working independently.⁶⁶



⁶⁶ Endline Interviews

	Area	Measurement	Baseline Mean	Endline Mean	% Change
i.	Identify & select business opportunities	Knowledge & skills	2.1	2.6	27%
ii.	Clear understanding of what factors to consider when starting an enterprise	Knowledge & skills	1.9	2.5	35%
iii.	Applying business skills in the workplace	Confidence	2.1	3.1	45%
iv.	Using business skills to influence others	Confidence	2.1	3.0	42%
v.	Building business relationships	Confidence	2.0	3.1	57%
vi.	Being able to achieve business goals and overcome barriers	Confidence	2.2	3.1	38%

The increase in enterprise skills was more marked than for some of the other areas. The greatest increase was in women's confidence in building business relationships, which went up by 57% over the course of the programme.⁶⁷ There was also marked increase in women's confidence in applying business skills in the workplace (45%) and in using their business skills to influence others (42%). The smallest increase was seen in their knowledge and skills in identifying and selecting business opportunities (27%).

Differences Between Groups

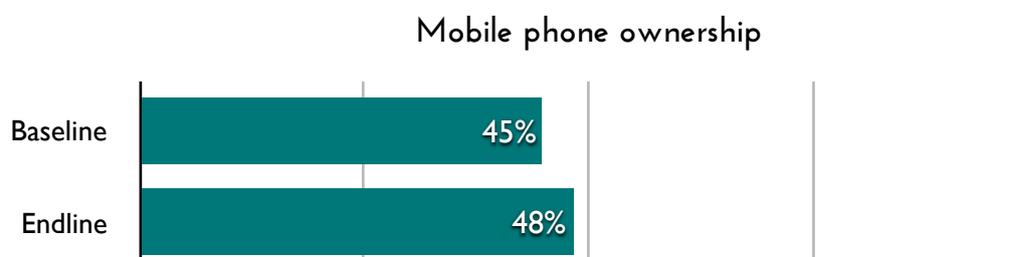
Group	Sub-Group	i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v.	vi.
Business ownership	Owner	2.8	2.7	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.1
	Non-owner	2.2	2.1	1.9	2.1	1.8	1.6
Training group	A	2.6	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0
	B & C	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.4
Education level	Primary/below	2.6	2.5	3.0	No significant difference		
	Secondary/TVET	3.0	2.9	3.4			

Business owners showed greater knowledge, skills and confidence across all dimensions of enterprise skills than those who did not own a business; similarly, those who received more intensive support over the training rated their knowledge, skills and confidence levels as being higher than the broader group; this finding is also supported by qualitative responses. Those with higher levels of education rated their knowledge and skills higher in identifying and selecting business opportunities, and understanding what factors to consider when starting an enterprise; and their confidence levels higher in applying business skills in the workplace.

⁶⁷ CARE fed back that this may have been due to a strong demand for these groups in terms of the maturity of their membership and women having set up businesses to which they could apply their skills (CARE feedback on the draft evaluation report, August 2016).

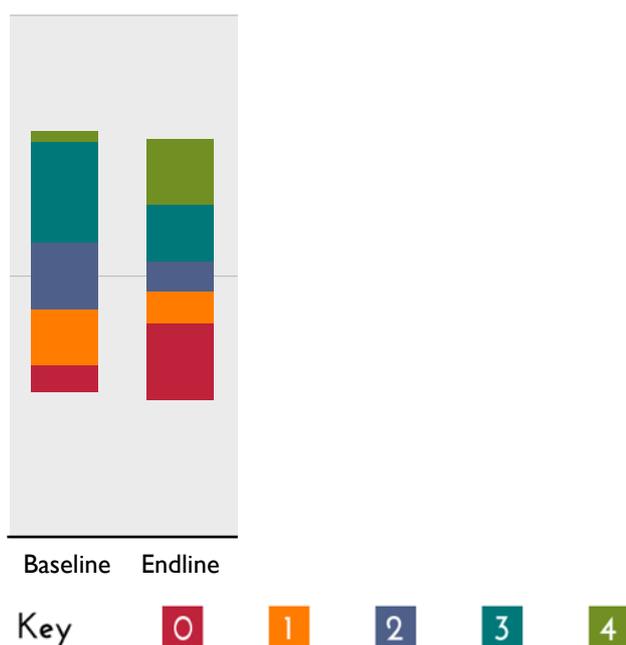
6.4 Mobile Linkage Skills

As noted previously, the mobile loan solutions element of the programme has not been included in the evaluation since activities in this area remain in progress; as such, no impact was observable. We have, however, assessed two elements of mobile phone use and uptake, which the Foundation wishes to explore separately.



Mobile phone ownership has increased by just over three percentage points over the course of the programme, although (due to the baseline data collection issue flagged elsewhere) the question was phrased differently in the baseline survey, which may have reduced the number of people who said that they had a phone.⁶⁸

Accessing Formal Financial Services through Mobile Phones



Area	Measurement	Baseline Mean	Endline Mean	% Change
Use of mobile phone to access formal financial services	Confidence	2.1	2.0	-3%

As anticipated, there was no increase in women's confidence in using mobile phones to access formal financial services over the course of the programme: there was an average fall of 3%, although this is a small

⁶⁸ In the baseline survey, respondents were asked whether they had a mobile phone with an active/working SIM card; in the endline survey, they were asked simply whether they had a mobile phone.

enough difference that it may not be representative of the overall population. One interesting change, however, reflected in the floating graph above, is that a greater proportion at the end of the programme have both no confidence and great confidence in their ability to do so; there was less neutrality in responses, even though the average score was similar. According to CARE, this may reflect the experience of women involved in (or aware of) the pilot Mobile Loan Solution (MLS).⁶⁹

Differences Between Groups

Group	Sub-Group	
Business ownership	Owner	2.1
	Non-owner	1.0
Training group	A	1.9
	B & C	3.0
Education level	Primary/below	NSD
	Secondary/TVET	

Business owners were far more confident in using mobile phones to access formal financial services, as were those who had received additional support through the programme. There were no significant differences in confidence according to levels of education.

⁶⁹ Feedback from CARE on the draft evaluation report (August 2016). The same question was asked of participants in the endline participatory workshops, who were not able to shed further light.

7. Impact on Business Growth

Key Findings

- Qualitative data suggests that business ownership has decreased for positive reasons, such as focusing on more successful businesses (rather than a portfolio).
- Data regarding revenue and profits should be handled with caution; overall, however, participants' revenues have mostly increased since the training.
- Employee numbers should also be treated with caution; but it is likely that employment levels have increased as a result of the programme.
- 38% of women interviewed have diversified their business products since attending the training.
- The majority of programme participants have increased their levels of investment; the most significant increase is from loans, while investment from savings has fallen. Loans are credited by participants to be significant drivers to business growth.
- While the number of women accessing loans has almost doubled, many women continue to experience difficulties in accessing finance.

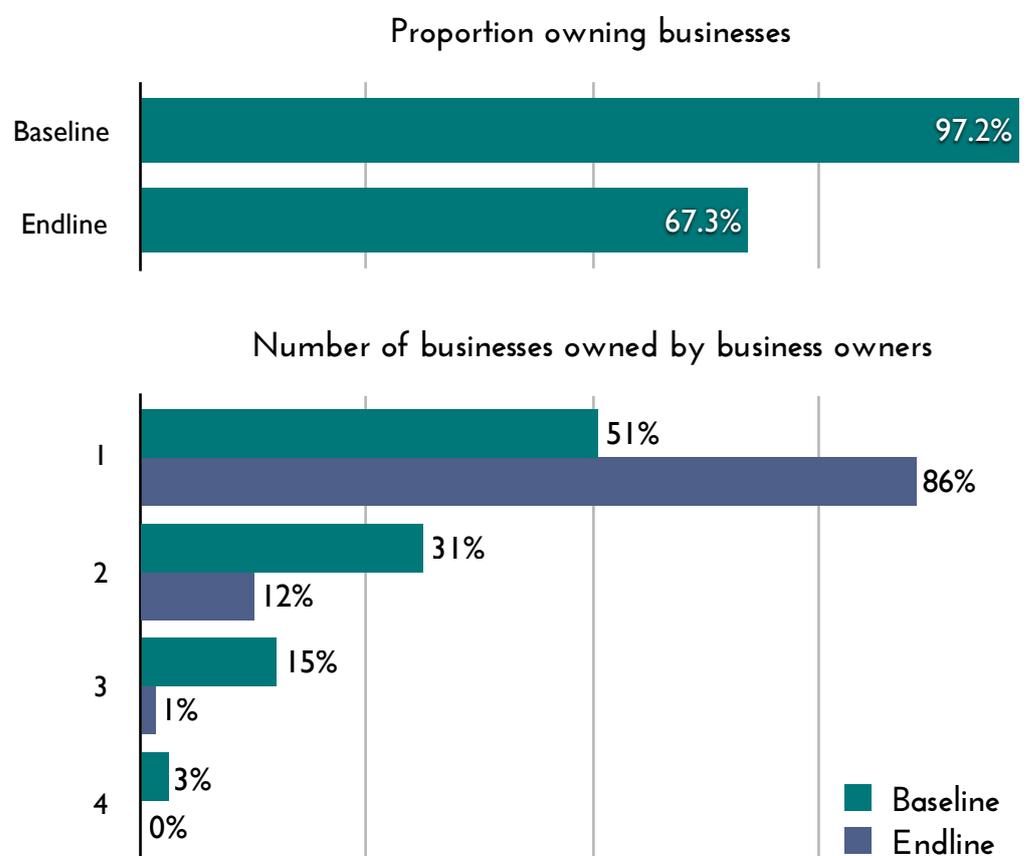
Information from the Skilling for Change Annual Report (see right) suggests a more positive picture of the impact on business growth than that suggested in the primary research explored in this section. This is likely due to a combination of reasons:

- The Management Information System (MIS) data provided by CARE covers all VSLA members, including men; the proportions attributable to women are estimated based on the overall proportion of women who constitute the groups. This has been the best information available to CBFW, and has therefore formed the basis of reporting so far, but the inclusion of men in the original data on which estimates are based is likely to have skewed the data. Given the challenges faced by women in starting and growing businesses, even allowing for their participation in Skilling for Change, the skew is likely to be positive.
- Baseline data issues (explored further below).

- 5,751 businesses sustained
- 2,353 new businesses created
- 4,415 jobs sustained
- 1,535 new jobs created
- 3,530 women linked to financial institutions
- 1,145 women accessed credit from a formal financial institution

Source: CBFW S4C Annual Report and Appendices.pptx

7.1 Business Ownership



There is a conflict between primary research findings, which found a fall both in the proportion of women owning businesses and the number of businesses per business owner, and CARE's MIS data, which showed business growth. Issues with both sets of data (see Appendix 3 for full primary data on business ownership, together with an exploration of the data issues) means that we relied more heavily on qualitative research.

There was strong evidence from the final participatory workshops to support the idea that business ownership has decreased, but for positive reasons: women who previously owned multiple businesses have focused on their most profitable, successful business(es). External factors may also have contributed - interviewees and one workshop participant mentioned the impact of a long, dry season which affected profits. Seasonal differences may also have had an impact for those who chose to define business ownership by whether their business was currently active - the baseline and endline research took place at different points of the year (February/March for the baseline and July for the endline). Agricultural businesses in particular are highly dependent on seasons, with many only being active/profitable when crops are ripe; one workshop participant commented that in the (current) dry season she finds it harder to sell her vegetables than at other times of year.⁷⁰

Differences Between Groups (% who are Business Owners)

Group	Sub-Group	Proportion (%)
Training	A	66%

⁷⁰ Other reasons mooted in the participatory workshops for declining business ownership included low capital investment and poor preparation on the part of business owners; two people (of 13 commenting on this issue) stated that they did not believe that the business decline was genuine.

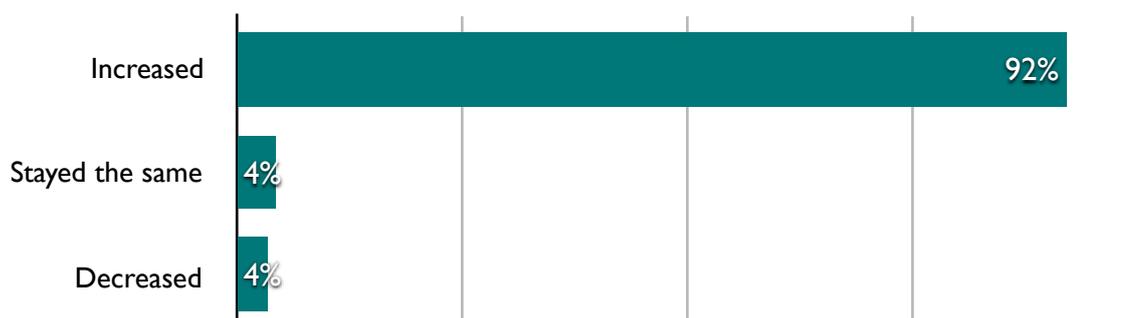
Group	Sub-Group	
group	B & C	90%
Education level	Primary/below	67%
	Secondary/TVET	85%

There are higher levels of business ownership among those who have received the greatest support from the programme. Those with higher levels of education are also much more likely to be business owners, suggesting that those with lower initial levels of education may need additional support to develop the skills, confidence and knowledge needed to set up and run their own businesses.

7.2 Revenue and Profits

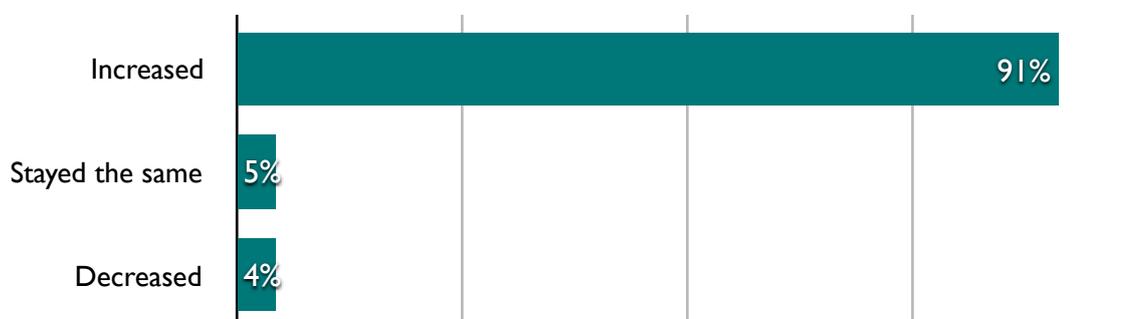
We have not included a comparison of baseline/endline revenue data, as analysis of the baseline data suggests that there is data missing from the indicator on revenue.⁷¹ It should be noted that revenue data is vulnerable to external factors; according to participatory workshop participants, revenue is affected by the seasons, with the dry season being particularly challenging for agricultural businesses. In some cases, there is also a ceiling level in terms of revenue: *'the purchasing power of our customers is too low, so there is an issue whereby you may start a business but in the end they do not really show up to buy from you'*.

Perceptions on changes to business revenue since the training



Retrospective assessment by participants of changes to their business revenue, while less reliable than baseline/endline comparisons, are highly favourable, with 92% saying that it has increased since the training.

Perceptions on changes to business profits since the training



⁷¹ The coding of the revenue question suggests that there should be more revenue variables (missing) which would then need combining in a similar way as we have done for other aspects; this is supported by the fact that average revenue figures for the baseline data are lower than average profit figures, which is impossible.

Average annual profit per business owned



As with revenue, retrospective assessments of profits are very positive: 91% said that their profits have increased since the training. With the baseline/endline comparison, we have chosen to focus on profit per business owned in baseline/endline comparisons, rather than overall average profit levels:⁷² the average at the baseline was RWF 93,123, compared to RWF 108,988 at the end of the programme (an increase of 17%).⁷³ This area still needs to be treated with caution, however; if, as seems likely, people have under-reported the number of businesses they own in the endline study, average per business profit will be lower than the headline figure.

Absence of a substantial profit increase may be attributable to a lack of learning and skills development on the part of some women. While some women gained sufficient skills to be able to manage their businesses properly, according to one workshop participant, others did not: *'do not forget that not everybody can learn and understand in the same way'*. Another mentioned specific business practices that contribute to lower profit levels - lack of record keeping and mixing up business and personal expenses.

Investment in assets is another reason behind the absence of higher profit levels; in these cases, profitability may be observed but over a longer timeframe than was spanned by the evaluation. Profitability is also affected by seasons, with the long dry season (over which the endline data collection took place) being particularly challenging.

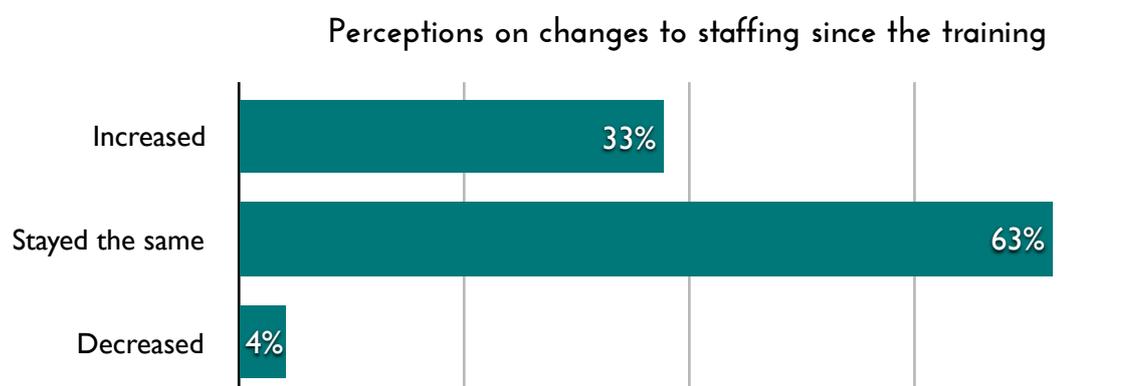
Differences Between Groups (Total Profit)

There were no significant differences in total profit levels either by training group or education level. This may suggest that greater attention could be given to selecting individuals with high growth or high growth potential businesses for more intensive levels of programme support, although it should be recognised (as above) that profitability may take longer than the programme duration to improve, particularly if women are reinvesting profits in capital and human resources.

⁷² This is for the reasons explained above under Business Ownership; overall profit levels are heavily influenced by the number of businesses owned (the endline data suggests that those who have two businesses have, on average, twice as much profit as those who only have one). If, as seems likely, the number of businesses owned is reported more highly in the baseline study than in the endline, this would also have an effect on average profit levels: those who own agriculture businesses in the endline study may not be defining them as such, and therefore may not be reporting the profit. It should be noted, for reference, that average profit levels in the baseline study were RWF 158,802, compared to RWF 129,239 in the endline study - a fall of 19%.

⁷³ USD 117.43 to USD 137.44 (xe.com, 11/08/2016)

7.3 Employees



There is conflicting data on employment, with self-assessments suggesting a net increase and baseline/endline comparisons suggesting a net decrease in the number of employees. For reasons outlined in Appendix 3, we have taken a view that retrospective assessment is more likely to be accurate here (i.e. employment has increased), but the actual figures should be interpreted cautiously due to the risk of over-reporting.

Differences Between Groups (Paid Permanent Staff)

Group	Sub-Group	
Training group	A	0.4
	B & C	1.5
Education level	Primary/below	NSD
	Secondary/TVET	

Those selected for more intensive training employ on average 1.5 members of staff on a paid and permanent basis; the figure for the broader group is just 0.4. This runs counter to the point above regarding profit levels and training groups: it may well be that businesses are being selected for more intensive support on the basis of employment levels rather than profit, which is also likely to have greater impact on the wider community. There were no significant differences in the number of permanent employees by level of education.

7.4 Diversification

38% of women interviewed during the endline study report that they have diversified their products and services since receiving the training. Typical examples provided in qualitative responses include cultivating and selling new agricultural products, such as fruit or grains, and rearing domestic animals for sale.

Differences Between Groups

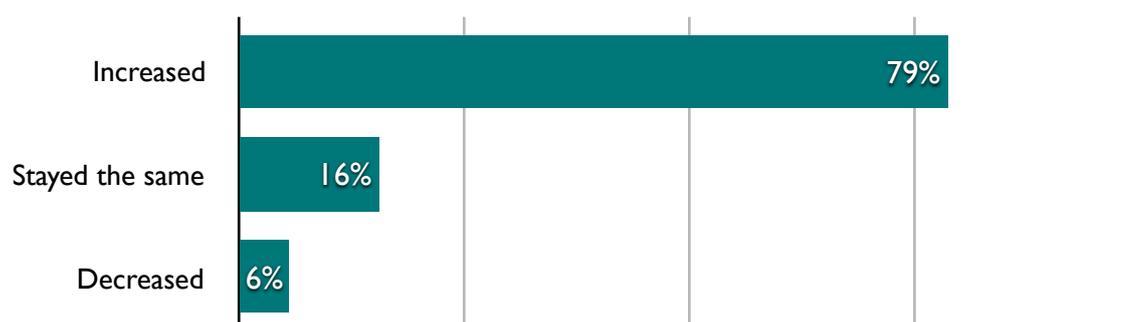
Group	Sub-Group	
Training group	A	37%
	B & C	58%
Education level	Primary/below	35%

Group	Sub-Group	
	Secondary/TVET	63%

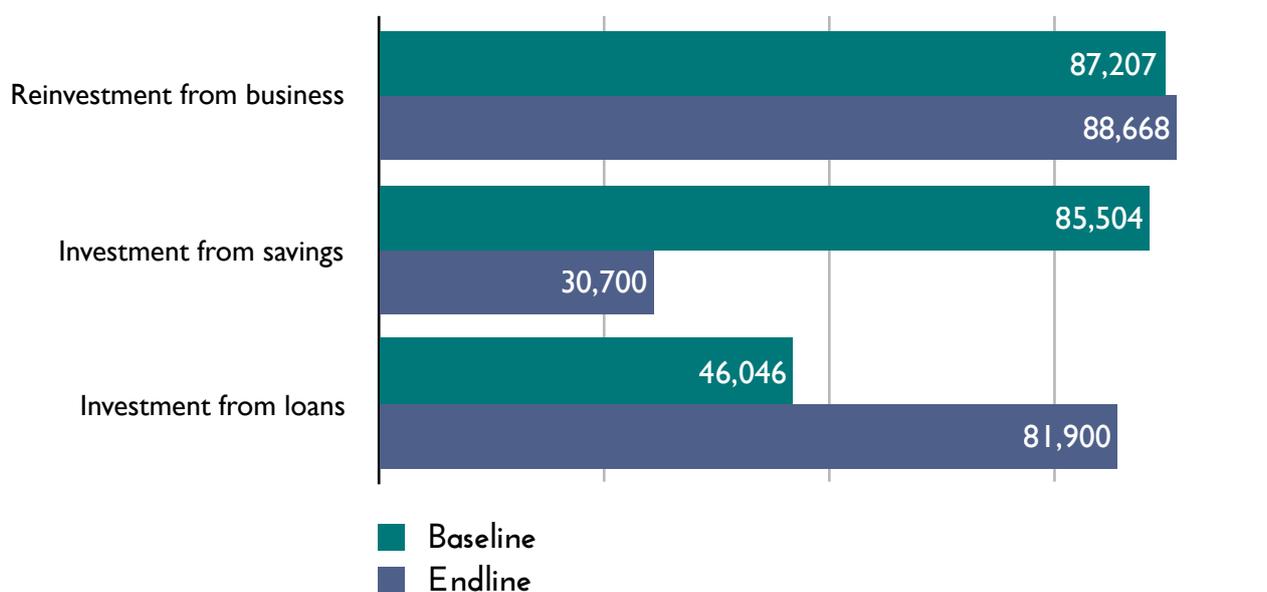
Those selected for more intensive training were more likely to have diversified their products and services; this was also the case for those with higher levels of education.

7.5 Business Investment

Perceptions on changes to investment levels since training



Changes to investment levels by type



Investment from other sources has not been included in the graph immediately above (*Changes to investment levels by type*) due to limitations with the baseline data; the figures above cannot be used to calculate total levels of investment, as one element has been excluded.

The top graph shows that almost four fifths of women assess their levels of investment, overall, as having increased. Levels of reinvestment from business have remained consistent, when comparing baseline figures with endline figures. Investment from savings has fallen by more than half, while investment from loans has almost doubled. This suggests that women are replacing their savings investment with loans investment.

85% of women⁷⁴ agreed or strongly agreed that individual loans helped them to grow their business; the

⁷⁴ Of those for whom the question was relevant, and who gave a rating.

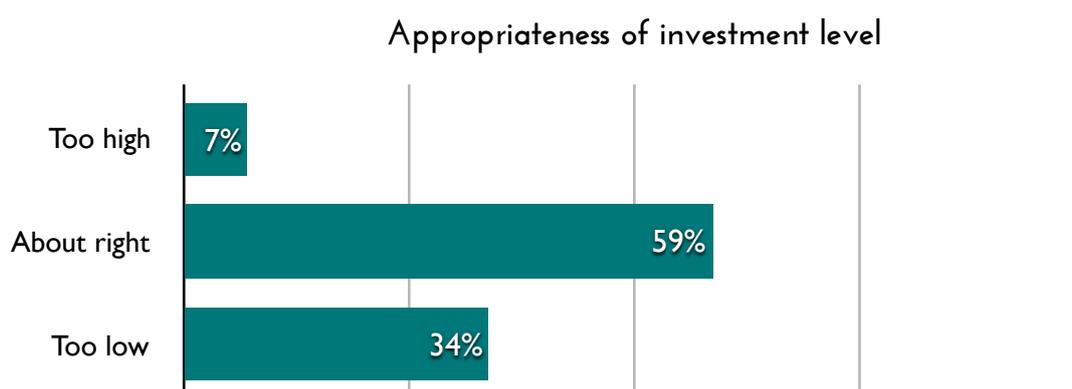
equivalent figure for group loans was 92%.⁷⁵ There is a general preference of investing money from savings rather than investing money from loans; insufficient capital, however, often prevents this. It was widely acknowledged by women attending the final participatory workshops that loans were necessary to ensure sufficient capital to generate profit. There were, however, mixed views regarding with this was 'good' or 'bad'. Concerns included interest repayment issues when business was slow. Perceived benefits, however, include the ability to generate greater income: *'all the people who got rich used loans'*, according to one workshop participant. Ensuring that money from loans is wisely invested is important, such as investing into the business only, rather than household expenses, and ensuring that appropriate plans are in place to repay the loan.

'Fear of... consequences' was believed by one woman at the final participatory workshop to be a key motivation to manage the loans effectively and repay them. Loan officers monitor the use and repayment of funds and are strict, according to one workshop respondent who felt this was beneficial: *'we are happy [about this] practice because in trying to pay back you end up having some savings, which helps in personal development'*. Loans are also credited with women's ability to employ more people as well as helping to improve living conditions, as some women used the funds to construct or improve their homes, buy land and livestock, as well as start businesses.

Differences Between Groups: Increases in Business Investment

Group	Sub-Group	
Training group	A	77%
	B & C	97%
Education level	Primary/below	NSD
	Secondary/TVET	

77% of the broader training group said that their business investment levels had increased since the training; for the group with more intensive support, this figure jumped to 97%. There were no significant differences by education level.

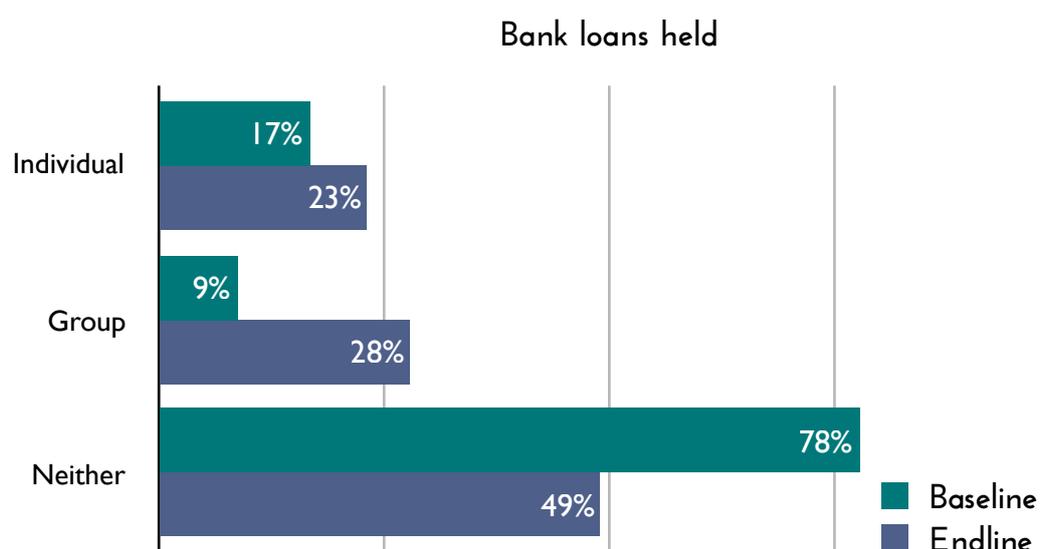


When asked whether the level of investment in their business was too high, too low or about right, over half of participants found it to be about right. 34% felt that it was too low and 7% that it was too high. There were no significant differences by group. While a majority felt that investment levels were appropriate, a smaller group of women may need further support (a) to access financial institutions and (b) to present their businesses and investment needs in a way which is likely to secure finance. In some cases, it may be necessary to manage expectations among women where they run businesses which are unlikely to appeal to FFIs.

⁷⁵ This question was only asked in the endline study.

7.6 Access to Finance

Survey evidence suggests that improving access to finance constitutes a key programme success; as noted below, the number of women accessing individual and groups loans doubled from 25% in the baseline study to 51% in the endline study. Qualitative evidence, however, indicates that a sizeable minority of women still experienced barriers to accessing finance, whether financial or non-financial, with focus group attendees and endline interviewees frequently referring to limited capital as an ongoing challenge to starting or expanding business activities.⁷⁶



Types of bank account held could not be compared between the baseline and the endline due to problems with the baseline data. Focus group participants, however, identified VSLA loans as the primary source of finance used to invest in a new or existing business.⁷⁷ In the endline study, 40% of women had an individual bank account, 42% had a group account, 5% had both and 12% had neither.⁷⁸

The proportion of individuals with either an individual loan or a group loan has doubled over the course of the programme, from 25% in the baseline study to 51% in the endline study. This is consistent with the finding above⁷⁹ that investment from loans has replaced a substantial proportion of investment from savings. While access to finance is an important objective of the programme, it may be important to interrogate this finding further when considering future project design: loans are important in the absence of other forms of investment, but they may not be the most appropriate form where investment from savings is equally possible for the women involved (as they must take into account interest repayable).

Differences Between Groups: Proportion with Individual/Group Loan

Group	Sub-Group	Proportion (%)
Training group	A	50%
	B & C	67%

⁷⁶ Focus group discussions and Endline interviews. These findings are further supported by an internal S4C impact assessment based on focus group discussion with programme beneficiaries

⁷⁷ Focus groups discussions

⁷⁸ Differences between the type of bank account held according to training group were not statistically significant.

⁷⁹ See Business Investment.

Group	Sub-Group	
Education level	Primary/below	NSD
	Secondary/TVET	

Those who had more intensive support from the programme were also more likely to have taken out a loan: 67% of this group had taken out either an individual or a group loan, compared to 50% of the broader group. There were no significant differences according to education level.

8. Women's Economic Empowerment

Key Findings

- Participants' confidence and knowledge in business skills increased over the course of the programme; many reported success from their entrepreneurial activities undertaken after their training.
- Women's empowerment has increased; they report being more able to access and use financial services, including loans.
- Financial situations have improved for both families (by 33%) and individuals (by 100%) over the course of the programme; household financial situations have also improved.
- Although there is some conflicting data, it is apparent that women who attended the training have since experienced increased levels of personal empowerment, with household decisions now more likely to be shared than made solely by the men.
- Participants frequently reported sharing their skills acquired in training with others in their community, including providing mentoring.

There are five areas of consideration relating to Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE): entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, household finances and decision making, leadership and time. It should be noted that there is a degree of crossover in this section with other areas of research in this evaluation; where this is the case, a summary has been presented, in order to avoid repetition.

Area	Indicator
Entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women feel confident and capable to start or grow a business • Women have ownership and decision making power over their business
Financial Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women have access to, and use, a range of financial services, such as savings, transfer, credit and insurance services
Household Income and Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women have sole or joint control over household income and expenditures • Women are able to make financial decisions within the home
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are comfortable speaking in public and act as role models for other women in the community
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are able to allocate sufficient time for their business, as well as other domestic tasks they may have

8.1 Entrepreneurship

Skilling for Change has had a positive impact on female entrepreneurship. Women's confidence and knowledge in business skills has increased over the course of the programme.⁸⁰ According to women entrepreneurs, the training programme helped them to appreciate that even relatively small loans and investments could allow them to expand their business capability significantly, as well as to understand the

⁸⁰ See section 6.1 (Business Skills).

importance of setting aside some of their profits for savings. One interviewee talked of her investment in small projects: *'with my husband, we started a [business] cultivating pineapples and now we are selling them. The money solves family needs.'*⁸¹

Focus group participants reported, for the most part, success from the entrepreneurial activities in which they had engaged following the training. While many women related successful experiences of investing in small-scale business activities, a minority of women struggled to generate profit from their investments. Where explanations were offered, external factors such as poor harvests and bad weather were cited as the main difficulties encountered; as one participant explained, *'If there is too much sun, we experience a loss because prices go up and you can only sell to a few people that can afford it.'* Further training focused on how protecting agricultural businesses from the impact of climate and environment, for example through crop insurance, may improve future sustainability. Other participants felt that even if they had not yet achieved a profit from their business activities, the training had given them the knowledge and skills to use what money they did have more carefully and strategically than before.⁸²

While overall levels of business ownership appears to have fallen, this is likely to have been driven, for the most part, by an increased focus by women owning multiple businesses on those with the greatest potential for growth and success.

8.2 Financial Inclusion

Women's empowerment in terms of access to, and use of, a range of financial services has improved over the course of the programme; in particular, there has been a notable increase in the number of women accessing loans, and a small increase in levels of savings. Importantly for women's empowerment, a significant proportion of women have also reported increased confidence in approaching financial institutions and accessing financial products since taking part in the programme.

Participants reported greater confidence in taking out loans with formal financial institutions and investing that money in order to expand their business activities; as one interviewee explained, *'before the training, I was wary of approaching financial institutions but now I am willing to work with them'*. For less confident participants, the training helped them access group loans in order to establish community business projects with other women involved in the training.⁸³ Women entrepreneurs who received intensive business training and/or mentoring demonstrated a greater confidence in accessing loans through formal financial institutions after the training compared to those that received basic business and financial literacy training.

As CBFW will be aware, improvements could be made in the area of financial inclusion through mobile loans solutions.

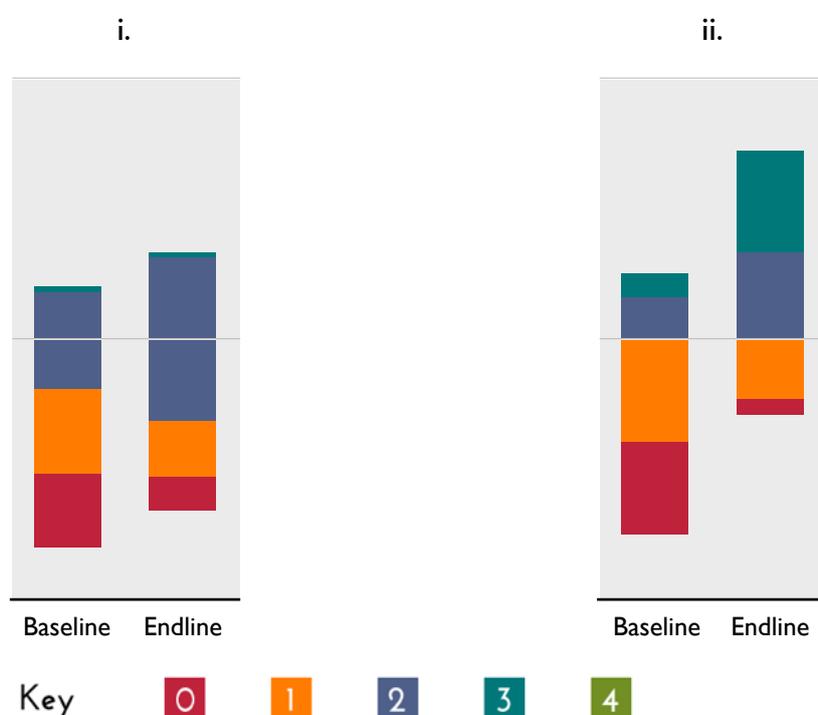
⁸¹ Endline interviews

⁸² Focus groups discussions

⁸³ Endline interviews

8.3 Household Finances and Decision Making

8.3.1 Household Finances



	Measures	
	i. Family Financial Situation	ii. Own Financial Situation
0	Not enough money for food	Had to borrow money to pay all typical family/personal expenses
1	Enough money for food, but buying clothes is difficult	Had to borrow money to pay some typical family/personal expenses
2	Enough money for food and clothes, and can save a bit	Paid all typical family/personal expenses, but had no money remaining
3	Can afford to buy certain expensive goods	Paid all typical family, personal expenses, but had some money remaining
4	Can afford to buy whatever we want	

The financial situation for both families and individuals has improved over the course of the programme. The mean for family financial situations improved by 33%, from 1.2 to 1.6 out of a possible 4; the mean for individual financial situations improved by a remarkable 110%, from 1.0 to 2.1 out of a possible 3. Household financial situations have improved, according to participants in the final workshops, with many households now able to pay school fees and health insurance more easily. Financial challenges had been reduced by increased savings and greater preparation for unforeseen costs. Children have also been able to open bank accounts, which is a new phenomenon.⁸⁴

Women often measure the success of their business activities in terms of having the financial means to pay for school fees, health insurance, household goods and services (such as electricity supply), and personal

⁸⁴ End of project participatory workshops

items (such as clothing and beauty products). Some participants also reported using additional finances to learn to drive and to build a house.⁸⁵

Overall, women entrepreneurs cited learning to save, as well as understanding how to use and repay small loans, as key factors in generating the extra income to improve their own and their families' situation.⁸⁶

8.3.2 Decision Making

The quantitative and qualitative primary research findings on empowerment related to decision making contradicted each other, with quantitative findings indicating a negative trajectory⁸⁷ and qualitative findings indicating a positive one (see Appendix 3 for full details). Given the data issues outlined elsewhere, this issue was tested further in the final participatory workshops.

Women in the workshops felt fiercely that their empowerment had increased as a result of the training, suggesting that the quantitative findings are incorrect. Household decision making is more

shared: previously, women's husbands tended to make decisions about household finances, whereas now it is more of a joint enterprise. According to one participant, *'after training... we got confident and empowered'*. For some women, money that was previously spent on beer or tobacco by their husbands now goes into the VSLA, as their partners have had an opportunity to see the benefits of investment. One commented: *'we ended up influencing them and they also became members of VSLAs'*.

Others have moved towards independent decision making: *'When my husband doesn't have money and I see an opportunity of buying good land, I go [to] a VSLA and take a loan and buy it; I don't wait for my husband to take my decisions.'* Some suggested that they had developed greater financial responsibility than their husbands.

While culture does play a role in women's economic empowerment, it was framed positively by one of the participatory workshop participants. When asked about the quantitative findings, she said: *'Maybe the reason behind your statement is because of the cultural element of respecting our husbands and talking with them before taking big decisions concerning our future. But our husbands respect our ideas and our needs, and our opinions are taken into consideration in the decisions made.'* According to another, views have shifted since the training; previously it was believed that *'when a woman has money, she no longer respects her husband, but it was not true. Now that we are more empowered, our husbands are happy as they are benefiting a great deal.'*

These workshop findings confirmed evidence from interviews with women entrepreneurs and indirect beneficiaries, and focus groups with the women. The training had a positive impact on women's financial self-reliance, as well as relationships with women's partners: one interviewee remarked, *'my husband now believes in my ability to run a successful business'*, while another reported that *'I no longer rely on my husband to take business decisions for me'*.⁸⁸ Focus group participants reported that *'husbands now see us as important members of the household'* and that many women involved in the programme had become more confident about investing and/or spending money earned through their own business activities without approaching their husbands.⁸⁹

'Before the training, a woman would go out to do some business and at the end of the day, your husband would come to you asking some money to buy beer. These days, when you go back home in the evening, your husband comes to you and you start counting how much profit you have made during your day and you decide what to do with that money. Most often, we decide to make the business bigger.'

- Workshop participant

'If training had not happened, men would still be undermining their wives; but because of the training our wives have proved to be capable and we respect them and their ideas'~Indirect Beneficiary

⁸⁵ Focus groups discussions

⁸⁶ Endline interviews

⁸⁷ According to the quantitative findings, individual decision making increased, but overall control by women over decision making (as measured by combining both sole and joint decision making) decreased.

⁸⁸ Endline interviews

⁸⁹ Focus group discussions

In interviews with indirect beneficiaries, there was also a clear emphasis on working in partnership to manage financial decisions, whether in business or household matters.

Workshop participants were asked how the training could foster greater levels of empowerment among women; there was broad consensus that the training had achieved its aims in this area. It was suggested that ongoing training - such as refresher courses - would help women to process and maintain their new knowledge.

Differences Between Groups

There were no differences in opinion on what women's say in household financial decisions should be, either by training group or by education level.

8.4 Leadership

A number of participants shared the knowledge received from the training with other family and community members; one interviewee commented that *'we have learnt good lessons, and feel encouraged to mobilise others,'* while another interviewee remarked, *'I influenced my neighbours and now they are VSLA members too'.* Interviewees also reported establishing links with women from other VSLAs to exchange ideas on increasing levels of independence.⁹⁰ Evidence from interviewees suggests that men married to programme participants responded positively to their wives sharing relevant financial knowledge and information to improve their household income and long-term planning. For example, as one interviewee explained, *'before my wife's training, I was doing business in a chaotic manner but her advice changed my mind about how to do business'.*

'Before the training my wife participated in, there was no development in my family. But after the training she shared the knowledge she acquired and we are able to get things we need in our family'~ Indirect Beneficiary

A number of women entrepreneurs that received intensive business training and/or mentoring reported that they had started to mentor inexperienced entrepreneurs within their community following the training. According to one endline interviewee, the training has helped her feel able to *'give advice to start-ups'*, while another respondent had started to mentor young entrepreneurs after becoming a member of the Private Sector Federation.

8.5 Time

Training sessions were held at the same time as weekly VSLA meetings in order to reduce any time burden on participants; however, in qualitative survey responses, a number of participants reported experiencing a conflict between the time needed to fulfil domestic duties, and the time required to participate in training and pursue income generating activities.

There was also a mixed picture in terms of women's expectations or experiences of support with domestic responsibilities from their husbands. In a few cases, women reported that their husbands had contributed to domestic duties, or helped with entrepreneurial activities in order to give women sufficient time to carry out domestic duties while maintaining a business. Other interviewees stated that they still have to *'obey their husbands'* and keep up with domestic responsibilities alongside their entrepreneurial activities.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Endline interviews

⁹¹ Endline interviews

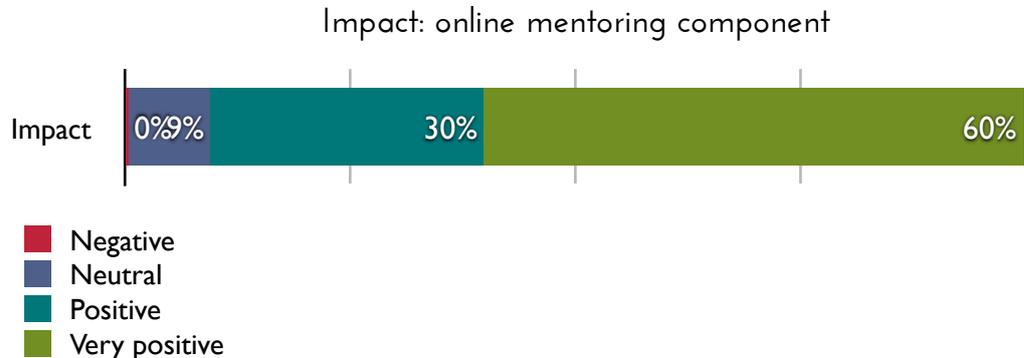
9. Impact of the Global Mentoring Programme

Key Findings

- 90% of those participating in the online mentoring component reported the impact as being positive or very positive.
- There was conflicting evidence regarding the impact on business revenue: while annual revenue increased on average by 8% between the baseline and the endline, there was also a large group of individuals who reported a fall in revenue.
- Sharing knowledge and learning from the mentor were the areas where greatest achievement was perceived by mentees; the area of least achievement was in improving mentees' financial knowledge and understanding of funding options.
- The greatest area of skills development for mentees was in strategy and management, although progress was evident in all dimensions.

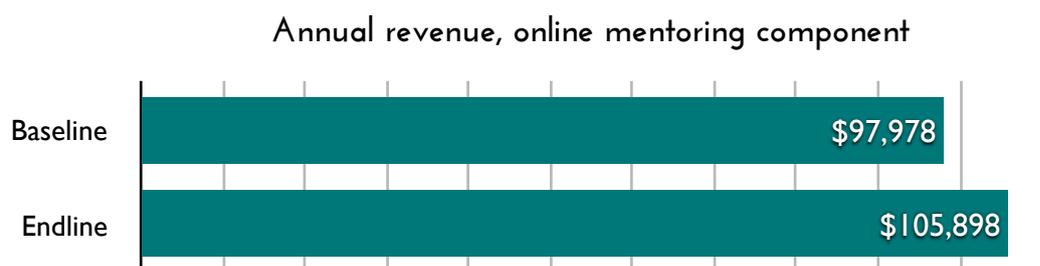
Baseline and endline data provided by the Skilling for Change programme was analysed to determine key areas of impact from participation in the Global Mentoring Programme. Limitations related to this data are outlined in section 3.3.

Overall Business Impact



Those who had participated in the online mentoring component were asked what impact their mentoring relationship had on their business. The vast majority - 90% - found the impact to be positive or very positive. 481 jobs were created since the start of the mentoring programme (an average of 1.8 jobs per mentee), but this figure needs to be treated extremely cautiously as respondents were not asked how many jobs had been lost over the same period.

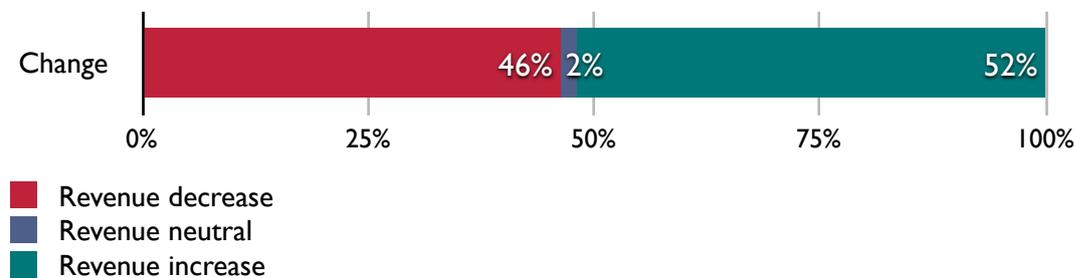
Business Revenue



While annual revenue increased by 8% on average between the baseline and the endline surveys for the

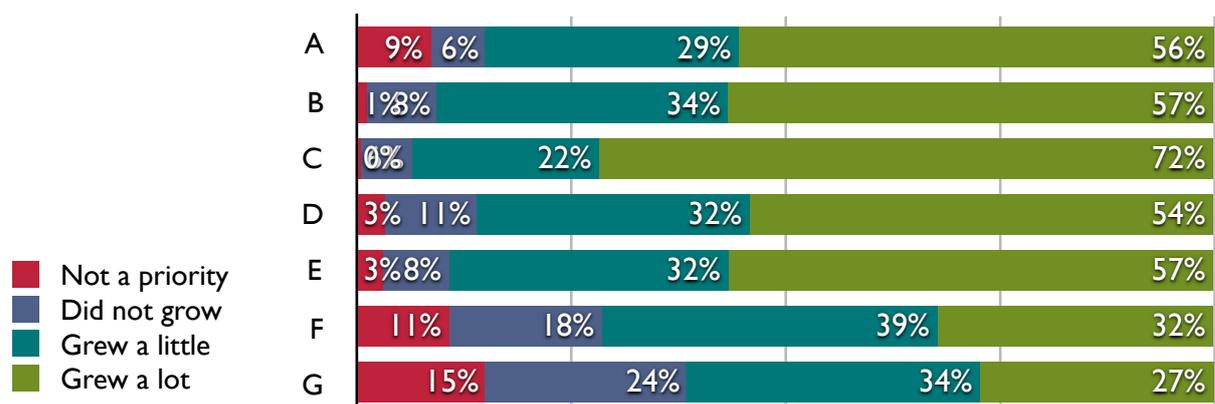
online mentoring component, there was a large group of individuals (46%) who saw their revenue levels fall over the same period.

Change in annual revenue (baseline to endline): online mentoring component



Perceived Achievements

Perceived achievements: online mentoring component



A: Improving communication skills and relationships with other people

B: Achieving business goals and finding ways around barriers

C: Sharing knowledge and learning from the mentoring partner

D: Making concrete progress on their business idea

E: Being innovative and challenging existing patterns of thinking and acting

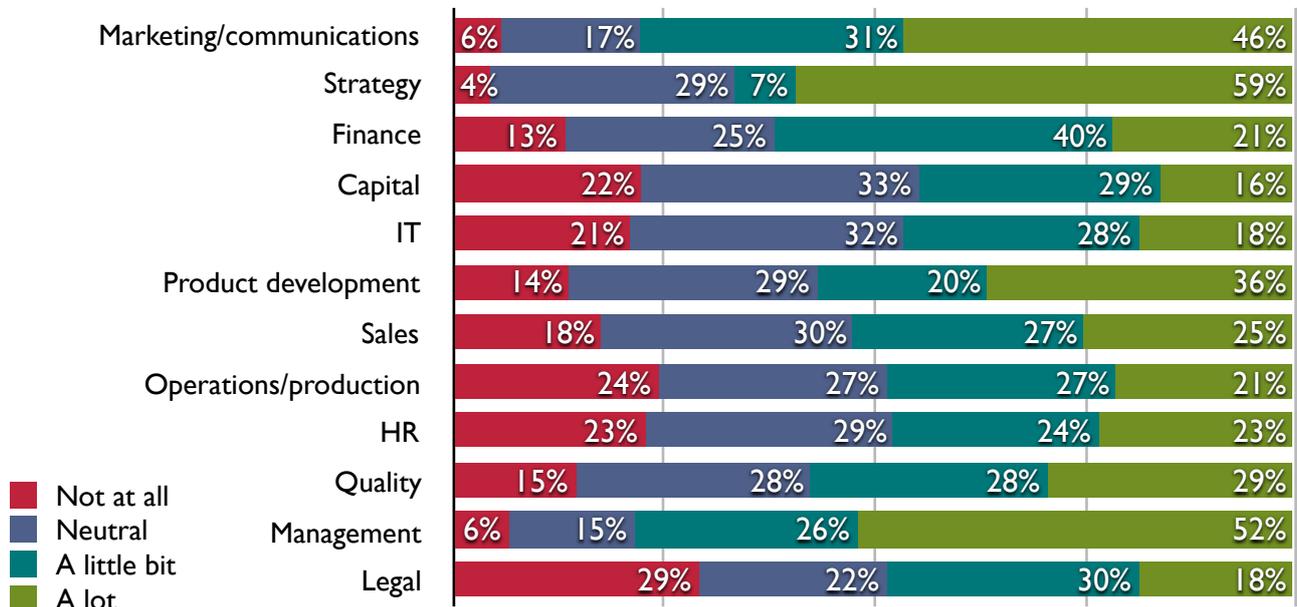
F: Finding ways to access other markets

G: Increasing my financial knowledge and understanding of funding options

Those who had participated in the online mentoring component were asked what they achieved with their mentors in the areas above. The greatest success was seen in sharing knowledge and learning from the mentoring partner, followed by achieving business goals and finding ways around barriers. The least success was in increasing mentees' financial knowledge and understanding of funding options.

Skills Gain

Perceived skills gain: online mentoring component



Participants in the online mentoring component were asked the extent to which they had gained certain skills. Clear progress was seen across all dimensions, with particularly strong progress in strategy, management and marketing/communications. The least progress⁹² was seen in capital, IT and quality skills.⁹³ It should be noted, however, that CBFV does not expect to see growth in all areas: ‘since the mentoring relationships are personalised and tailored to specific topics that the mentee/mentor need and want to work on, we never expect that the mentee-mentor will work on all of these areas and [therefore] never expect that a mentee will grow in all of these areas’. The growth in capital, IT and quality skills was comparatively low because few mentees were working on these areas.⁹⁴ 96% of mentees had seen their skills increase⁹⁵ in at least one area.

Confidence

97% of mentees said that the programme had increased their confidence levels by a little bit or a lot. Confidence was also cited by a number of mentees when asked what the best or most valuable outcome of their mentoring relationship had been. One commented, for example: ‘My confidence has improved greatly and I [feel] I can face any challenge that comes in order to build a successful business. I have learnt new skills, applied them and seen them work and it has been an exciting journey!’

⁹² As measured by the smallest proportions who had seen a little or a lot of change.

⁹³ Analysis of mentoring data.

⁹⁴ Feedback from CBFV on the draft evaluation report (August 2016).

⁹⁵ Defined as by ‘a little bit’ or ‘a lot’.

10. Indirect and Unanticipated Impact

Key Findings

- The majority of participants' spouses were supportive of their involvement in the programme, although a small minority of beneficiaries experienced opposition and/or verbal abuse from their husbands as a result of their participation.
- Positive impact was reported for indirect beneficiaries as a result of the programme, including strong improvement for families in the areas of health and education, household resources (including livestock) and household relations.
- At community level, positive impacts were also reported as resulting from the programme. These impacts included reduced levels of poverty and the ability of the trained women to act as role models and mentors for community members wishing to start up businesses, and improved employment opportunities.
- The management of VSLAs was reported to have improved as an indirect benefit of the programme, as a result of better business knowledge and practices.

10.1 Indirect Impact

Qualitative responses from the endline survey indicate that the majority of participants received family support to attend the training; this includes married women entrepreneurs, as well as those that live alone or with dependent family members (children or elderly relatives). As one interviewee explained, *'my family were happy that the knowledge I gained would lead to some improvements in our family life'*.⁹⁶ While most married women entrepreneurs referred positively to the support that they received from their husbands, a small number found that their husbands were only persuaded to be supportive once they could see the benefits of the training for the wider household. Others reported that they had encountered opposition and/or experienced verbal abuse from their husbands throughout the training programme; this was reflected across all three groups of women entrepreneurs in Rwanda (basic business training, intensive business training and mentoring programme).

Having men included and present in the training was beneficial. The women attending the training found that their male counterparts were not only learning to manage their own businesses better, but sharing their knowledge more broadly with their own families and peers. Additional benefits included greater household harmony for some, where women and men would share their experiences and observe positive change; and greater understanding from husbands not attending: *'the men who got training with us would tell our husbands what was good with the training'*. One woman who attended the final participatory workshop was a member of a different VSLA to her husband, so the couple were able to take out two separate loans. Programme documentation also suggests that counselling for husbands alongside training for women has reduced rates of drinking and money taken from wives' businesses.

Other ways in which the programme has had indirect impact include:⁹⁷

- **Increasing household resources:** Women entrepreneurs reported that the programme had helped them to generate the necessary income to consistently pay for their children's school fees and other education materials, and for health insurance and medicine for all households members.

'I learnt about saving and this helped greatly to improve my family's living conditions. With the savings, I paid for health insurance, schools fees and clothes for the children.' ~ Woman Entrepreneur

⁹⁶ Endline interviews

⁹⁷ Endline interviews

These women were able to improve their living conditions and household resources by putting the training into practice. Investments in household resources range from buying a bed and mattress to building a house. A significant number of interviewees also bought livestock to secure their family's wellbeing (for example, by providing milk) as well as to support their income generating activities.

- **Improving household relations:** The majority of participants reported improved household relations as a result of business activities since taking part in the training programme. As one interviewee commented, *'we have better living conditions, and there is a lot of harmony in the family.'* For some interviewees, generating money to pay for household expenses through their own business activities had a positive impact on household relations; as one interviewee explained, *'since creating a small business for myself, I am no longer waiting for money from my husband'*.
- **Acting as positive role models:** Women attending the final participatory workshop spoke of sharing what they learned with other community members. Some women who attended the training see themselves as role models within their community and provide advice and guidance to others, contributing ultimately to a reduction in poverty. Three women attending the final participatory workshop have persuaded other women in their community to join VSLAs, demonstrating the success of their own membership (such as new clothes and better business products). One final participatory workshop respondent now coaches a number of women on the production of sorghum beer, including three young, female secondary school graduates: *'sometimes I let them use my house and they sell their beer and find some money for their basic needs'*.
- **Helping vulnerable community members:** The training also helped to improve the situation of more vulnerable members of the community, for example, one interviewee commented: *'I am old but being part of the VSLA and receiving training helped me not to feel alone and helpless, and now I easily find money to cover my needs'*, while another interviewee explained: *'I am from a poor family, my father is old and I didn't get a chance to continue my studies... the VSLA and the training saved my life because I got an opportunity to find money and do what I am capable of.'*⁹⁸

10.2 Unanticipated Impact

A number of programme participants reported that they had given money to individuals claiming to be part of the programme, ostensibly as fees to help them grow their business and to access new services. This information indicates that there may be confidence tricksters targeting participants; it is important for this to be addressed in future iterations of the programme.⁹⁹

Indirect beneficiaries also reported a positive impact for the wider community as a result of the establishment of VSLAs and associated training; this includes greater social cohesiveness, reduced levels of poverty and poverty-related conflict,¹⁰⁰ and more jobs as a result of trained women starting up new businesses or expanding existing ones. Analysis of qualitative evidence from programme participants and indirect beneficiaries suggests that the management of VSLAs has improved as a result of the financial knowledge and understanding that was gained through the training and subsequently shared at community level. In this respect, interviewees credit the training programme with reducing poverty levels not only within the families of trained women but for all community members involved in the VSLAs.

⁹⁸ Endline interviews

⁹⁹ Endline interviews

¹⁰⁰ See Section 8.4 Leadership

11. Efficiency

Key Findings

- The programme was successful in meeting all its targets in terms of recruitment and participation. This was the case for all four strands: online mentoring, financial literacy training, tailored training and business incubation/coaching.
- The programme design and delivery have been cost efficient, with success partly being due the model of building on existing structures (VSLAs).
- Budgets have been well managed and procurement processes are both thorough and ethical.

11.1 Logframe and Planning

	Target	Achieved?
1	600 new mentees were recruited globally.	Yes
2	15,000 women received financial literacy training.	Yes
3	150 women entrepreneurs received tailored face to face training.	Yes
4	75 women entrepreneurs received business incubation and coaching.	Yes

As shown by the table above, the programme was successful in reaching the targeted number of individuals.

A detailed programme plan identified tasks and activities required to carry out the project. An additional responsibility matrix identified the key stakeholders responsible for these project deliverables using the RACI model (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed). A further matrix identified 66 key milestones to track project delivery using the RAG model (Red, Amber, Green, Completed) to measure progress in meeting these milestones.¹⁰¹ While it is clear that the programme team kept detailed records through the programme plan and logframe, stakeholder interviews suggest that not all relevant parties were aware of these documents. Programme updates were also shared quarterly with all stakeholders via narrative reports.

11.2 Cost Efficiency

CBFW's procurement processes appear to be thorough and streamlined. There is a clearly ethical approach to procurement, with prioritisation of small and local suppliers, and a sustainable procurement policy which prioritises environmental considerations, and aims to 'get value for money on a whole life basis'.¹⁰² Care International's procurement policy does not incorporate ethical considerations, but it does carefully balance value for money against protracted processes by setting the following thresholds: ordering (goods or services less than £3,000), quotations (a minimum of three quotations for goods or services between £3,001 and £10,000) and tendering (goods or services greater than £10,000). Value for money is also sought by setting purchase authorisation limits for different levels of budget holder.¹⁰³

Budgets have been carefully managed within the programme; the overall programme is forecast to have spent 98% of available funds. Within the different sub-streams, the maximum budget variation is 7%; a tolerance of 10% would normally be expected for a project of this size, so we conclude that budgets have

¹⁰¹ Final Skilling for Change - Programme Plan V.3

¹⁰² Cherie Blair Foundation for Women - Procurement Policy, November 2014

¹⁰³ CIUK Policy - Procurement of Goods and Services, April 2016

been well managed. Overspend was most consistent in the area of third party services, suggesting that CBFW may want to consider increasing the allocation share for third party services in future roll-out of the model; it should be noted, however, that this overspend was recouped in other areas.¹⁰⁴

Stakeholder interviewees felt that the programme design and delivery were cost efficient; according to one interviewee, the project succeeds in '*punching above its weight*' by building on existing structure for its delivery model. Another stakeholder interviewee, not directly involved in programme implementation, commented favourably on the clarity and transparency with which CBFW managed budgets and resources.

¹⁰⁴ S4C Forecasted Expenditure.xls

12. Sustainability

Key Findings

- Stakeholders believe that the programme can be both expanded in Rwanda and rolled out in other countries; there are elements of the design, however, which need amending in order to maximise the programme's success.
- Greater training and support for in-country partners will also be key for future programme sustainability, along with more rigorous quality assurance to check that implementation is in accordance with programme design.
- Ongoing support or training, building on what has already been delivered (including recaps of training content) would enable women to continue realising the benefits of their training. Sustainability will also be improved once the mobile loan solution has been developed to a point where it can be implemented effectively.

Participants and stakeholders were asked for feedback on what had worked well in the training, and areas that would benefit from improvement, in order to ensure the future sustainability of the programme; they were also asked for their thoughts on potential programme expansion.

Lessons Learned

- **Case studies:** Participants interviewed for the endline surveys felt that the use of case studies of other women who had successfully started businesses with limited capital, as well as the use of examples similar to real life has helped to make the training more accessible.¹⁰⁵
- **Clear learning pathways:** Programme team and partner organisations felt that the programme was well-structured; as one interviewee observed, the various components provide '*tangible steps*' that women entrepreneurs can follow from initial training in financial literacy through to business incubation and individual mentoring.
- **Experienced trainers:** Participants emphasised the benefits of sessions led by experienced trainers, using effective teaching methods and held at accessible times and locations. A number of respondents also referred positively to the encouragement received during training to identify how to turn natural talents into business ideas, and to work closely with husbands to minimise any conflict within the household.¹⁰⁶
- **Use of online learning:** Programme team members and partners involved in the global mentoring platform felt that the combination of webinars and mentoring relationships had worked well. Based on observations of online content and feedback, one interviewee stated that the platform had produced a '*thriving community*' of women entrepreneurs.
- **Building on existing infrastructure:** Most stakeholder interviewees felt that the strategy of delivering the programme using existing structures - namely, established VSLAs and CARE's network of Village Agents - contributed to programme sustainability. One interviewee questioned, however, whether using volunteer Village Agents would be sustainable across future iterations and/or expansion of the programme.

¹⁰⁵ Endline interviews

¹⁰⁶ Focus groups discussions

Potential Improvements

- **Pre-training consultation workshops:** Programme team and partner interviewees suggested a participatory workshop with beneficiaries at the inception stage of the programme in order to evaluate the suitability of training content and materials; and closer monitoring of impact at community level, especially any potentially harmful impact.
- **Developing ongoing or further training:** Over half of a randomised sample of endline interview respondents (27 of 50) wanted to receive more training, many of these suggested ongoing or refresher training sessions.¹⁰⁷ Key areas for further training identified in programme documentation include bookkeeping, business diversification, technical skills (e.g. poultry farming or soap making) and financial management.¹⁰⁸ Hosted networking events or using a referral system to provide ongoing support for trained women was also suggested.
- **Accessing more financial support:** Approximately a third of a randomised sample of endline interview respondents (17 of 50) expressed a need for greater support to access loans; these respondents emphasised that they would like CARE to provide direct financial support alongside further advice and support to access loans from formal financial institutions.
- **Diversification of training:** Stakeholder interviewees also questioned the benefits of offering different training modules to women entrepreneurs working in particular sectors or industries. As one interviewee remarked, *'it is important to recognise different backgrounds of women and consider whether to group them according to their profile'*. Another interviewee felt that the programme would be strengthened through expanding the mentoring programme further.

Further improvements suggested by individual respondents include advice on how to manage money within the VSLA, mentoring for small business owners in rural areas, and further support to ensure that household relations are not adversely affected by women pursuing new entrepreneurial activities.¹⁰⁹

Prospective Expansion

- **Programme expansion within Rwanda:** Interviewees were confident about the potential for future programme expansion. Within Rwanda, one interviewee commented that *'there is demand to roll out'* the training amongst women entrepreneurs; the same interviewee also reflected on the benefits of working with the Rwandan Government under the framework of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- **Replicating the programme internationally:** There was a broad consensus that the programme could be replicated in other countries, especially if programme delivery continued to focus on *'supporting women through normal living conditions'* such as VSLA networks. Attracting sufficient funding was seen as the main barrier to programme expansion, whether in Rwanda or other countries, according to a number of interviewees.

Benefits of the Foundation's use of existing networks and infrastructure for programme delivery include sustainability, use of existing knowledge and contacts, and reduced costs; a major challenge (when operating internationally) is that an appropriate balance must be achieved between building up trust between partners while also ensuring that project deliverables are being delivered as planned. The Foundation could consider greater training and support for in-country partners (which help to build both capacity and trust), while also implementing ongoing and rigorous quality assurance mechanisms. It must be recognised, however, that this will require greater resources in terms of time from the Foundation.

¹⁰⁷ As noted in Section 4.2 above, it is not clear whether all participants received the full training programme.

¹⁰⁸ S4C Focus Group Discussion Report

¹⁰⁹ Endline Interviews

13. Learning

Key Findings

- The high levels of positive impact indicate that the model and its constituent components are successful, although a more explicit focus on women's economic empowerment could improve the model further. Intensive training schemes also yielded stronger impact and better outcomes.
- Sharing knowledge around financial institutions and their processes; developing relationships with these institutions was key for beneficiaries.
- Ensuring that the programme was embedded in cultural contexts ensured that the impact was wider than anticipated; providing incubation opportunities was also another effective aspect of the programme's model.
- A key reason behind the lack of success of the mobile lending solution was a lack of time with which to develop a strong relationship with banking partners, and also that local banking agents should be used, rather than relying on existing Village Agents.

How did the combination of investment readiness, financial literacy, business training and incubation in Rwanda contribute to the project outcomes?

The high levels of positive impact reported by programme participants indicates that the S4C model has been successful, with its emphasis on financial knowledge and skills, access to finance and business competency training. Training also provided women with greater confidence in their own abilities; as one woman in the final participatory workshop said that she had been shy prior to the training, but now in a VSLA meeting she feels *'smart and confident'*. The confidence demonstrated by participants in their business skills is likely to have led to business growth and better use of funding; access to finance alone may not have ensured this outcome. A more explicit focus on women's economic empowerment during the training, however, could have contributed to more positive outcomes in this area.

While there is a strong likelihood of selection bias for the intensive training group, it is likely that the women in this group experienced greater benefits and impact than those in the general training group. Endline survey respondents from the intensive training group had a consistently clearer sense of themselves as *'entrepreneurs'* compared to the general training group, as well as expressing a commitment to sharing that learning with other local women through informal mentoring and advice.¹¹⁰ This would indicate that the incubation element of the model yielded stronger outcomes than the general training model alone; it may be beneficial in future for the programme design to incorporate greater provision of individual support and incubation, possibly through a local peer mentoring scheme.

Workshop participants highlighted the impact of SACCO, which would not, they felt, have been accessible to them without the training provided. Their increased awareness of loans available and how to generate profit and repay those loans was a direct impact of the training. The combination of skills provided has also had an impact on participants: *'We learnt about action plan and budgeting and this has been very effective.'* One participant had been left by her husband and used her acquired knowledge to build a modern house for herself and her four children, as well as some livestock and, like many others in the workshop had developed the courage to take out a loan: *'training took away my fear of loans'*. Understanding how to invest those loans also proved invaluable and one participant suggested that more training in this area would be beneficial.

¹¹⁰This was the extent of clear differences in responses between the groups.

One workshop participant felt that lack of knowledge was not what had been preventing them from generating a profit, but lack of money: *'I do it well and I know what it takes to make it profitable'*. Others, however, felt that the skills they gained from the training were invaluable to their success; one respondent found herself not only working more effectively with financial institutions, but running her business more efficiently and understanding her competition. Another respondent benefitted from applying her newly acquired bookkeeping skills, ensuring that she herself received a salary, as well as her employees.

What was the most effective and sustainable model for connecting women entrepreneurs to financing services?

Understanding the financial institutions' processes and developing relationships with them was a key part of the training. One woman in the final participatory workshop clarified that it is *'not a matter of going and signing a contract with a bank or financial institution... [but] understanding why you are doing that and the benefits and risks that you are running in doing so'*. This element of the training allowed the women to seek loans beyond SACCO and their relatively high fees and interest rates: according to one respondent, rural banks charge 7,300 RWF to open an account and account holders must deposit and withdraw funds regularly for three months before accessing a loan.

What were the most effective methodologies and approaches used to bring about changes to people's lives?

Elements of the training with the most impact on women's lives included the financial planning, helping them understand their finances, including ensuring that they themselves are paid a salary for their work, that all produce is correctly accounted for in their profit and loss calculations and that additional business opportunities can be seized with the help of VSLA loans.

Embedding the programme within cultural contexts

The encouragement of women in workshops to share their knowledge and success with their spouses appears anecdotally to have contributed to household harmony for a number of participants; it was also noted by spouses themselves that they appreciated the newfound skills their wives possessed.¹¹¹ This approach demonstrates the need for programmes to understand and address cultural norms, so that they do not prevent the programme objectives and outcomes from being achieved.

Incubation

As noted above, the incubation of businesses and mentoring, through intensive training pathways, yielded positive outcomes for women in this stream; it should be noted, however, that the selection of these women as 'high performers' may be restricting the access of other women, requiring more support, to this enhanced impact.

What were the reasons behind lack of success of the mobile lending solution, and what lessons can be learned for future programming?

Programme team and partner organisations broadly agreed that all parties needed to be *'more realistic'* about the time required to establish a successful working relationship with the banking partner. As one interviewee observed, it takes time to persuade profit-driven private sector organisations such as banks that savings groups represent a marketable audience, and then to develop products together are tailored to the needs of programme beneficiaries whilst being profitable for the bank. Another interviewee felt that the key lesson learnt was that the banking partner needs to be on board prior to programme implementation if products are to be successfully delivered to beneficiaries within the expected timeframe.

There were two other areas of learning identified by programme team and partners; one interviewee

¹¹¹ It should be noted that there may be selection bias here, as spouses less comfortable with the project may have been less likely to agree to be interviewed.

emphasised that women entrepreneurs should not be made aware of the MLS programme until it was ready to be rolled out, as the current cohort had been left *'eager and waiting with excitement'* for the financial support offered by the MLS products. Another interviewee felt that the bank should be involved in selecting and training local banking agents rather than relying on CARE's network of Village Agents to fulfil that role.

Programme team and partners also drew attention to the ongoing potential for the MLS programme following recent progress in getting it off the ground. As one interviewee commented, *'I know that people have been disappointed, as it is not the pace that they anticipated, but what has been achieved is great'*.

What else has worked and what has not? What lessons have been learned?

Beneficiaries and programme team members reported on a number of areas that had worked well, and those that may require further development. Please note that discussion of potential programme improvements is considered in greater depth in Section 12: Sustainability and in the recommendations section.

14. Conclusions

Relevance

- Despite recent government initiatives, women entrepreneurs in Rwanda face significant barriers to economic empowerment, including limited access to finance, lack of market information and networking opportunities, and poverty.
- Women entrepreneurs have identified a need to improve their business skills and confidence, their understanding of profitability and managing household finances, and accessing financial support.
- The Skilling for Change programme was developed with a clear understanding and assessment of the needs of the beneficiary group; it is evident that the training programme was designed to address these needs.
- Some beneficiaries mistakenly believed that the programme would provide actual financial support; this group did not feel that their expectations had been met.

Effectiveness

- Three out of four targets are expressed as percentages of percentages. For clarity and conceptual coherence, the Foundation could consider simplifying its measurable targets associated with the programme objectives.
- 64% of women entrepreneurs improved their skills over the course of the programme, narrowly missing the target of 70%. It is worth noting that endline respondents can often rate their skills as being lower than at the start of training programmes, however, when they are aware of how much they do not know.
- 26% of women gained access to formal finance through participation in the programme, well exceeding the target of 10%.
- A retrospective question on business revenue showed that 96% of participants had sustained or increased their business revenue over the course of the programme; it must be noted, however, that this result is likely to have a strong positive bias.
- The target for sustaining or increasing the number of employees has been met, but there are issues with the metric (which would allow a significant net fall in employment).
- Positive feedback was mostly given regarding the success of collaborations between national and international programme partners. A key area for future improvement would be to simplify relationships between partners and make interaction more direct; this would avoid unnecessary complication and miscommunication.

Impact

Business Skills

- Participants' rating of their own business skills improved over the course of the programme, particularly their perceptions of their abilities as a business person (an increase of 29%). It is notable that those with higher levels of education had greater confidence than those with education at primary level and below.
- Participants showed clear improvement across all five areas of financial knowledge, with the greatest change occurring in women's ability to identify the advantages and disadvantages of different savings products (an increase of 68%). Those who had been in the more intensive training groups also rated their financial knowledge more highly than those in the general group, although this may be due to selection bias.
- In terms of financial skills, participants showed improvement of between 20% and 27% across all six areas under consideration; the highest increase was in people's confidence in being able to secure a loan when

required.

- Positive change was also seen in all six dimensions of enterprise skills, with the most marked change occurring in women's confidence to build business relationships (an increase of 57%). Clear changes also occurred to women's confidence in applying business skills in the workplace (45%) and use of their business skills to influence others (42%). These changes were more positive overall for women receiving intensive training than for those in the mainstream training group.
- Use of mobile loan solutions was not measured in the endline research, as it was already recognised by the Foundation that impact would be impossible due to challenges with implementation. Lessons learned for this part of the programme have been considered separately below.

Business Growth

- Women who previously owned multiple businesses have focused on those which are most successful, leading to streamlining in the overall number of businesses.
- Retrospective feedback indicates that 92% of participants' business revenue had increased since training; 91% of respondents also reported increased profits retrospectively, which comparisons of baseline and endline data suggested increased from an average of RWF 93,123 to RWF 108,988.¹¹²
- Profitability may take a longer time to come to fruition for many businesses than the timeframe over which the evaluation spanned. Profitability for agriculture businesses is also highly dependent upon seasons.
- There is conflicting evidence on employment levels; the best available evidence points towards a net increase in the number of employees.
- 38% of women reported having diversified their business since the training occurred. Those receiving intensive training were more likely to have diversified than those in the mainstream group, as were those with higher levels of education.
- 85% of women agreed or strongly agreed that individual loans had helped them to develop their business; 92% of those receiving group loans responded similarly. Women recognise the value of loans in ensuring longer term profit. However, the data implies that women are replacing savings investment with investment from loans; this may have negative consequences longer term when interest is taken into account.
- Almost all those receiving intensive training reported an increase in their business investment levels since the training; 77% of those in the mainstream group also reported an increase. Nearly 60% of participants felt that the level of investment in their business was about right.
- Access to finance is an area in which Skilling for Change has seen particular success.

Women's Economic Empowerment

- Female entrepreneurship has been positively affected by Skilling for Change, with confidence and skills in entrepreneurial activities increasing. A small minority of women struggled to turn a profit; it was felt, however, that in cases where profit had not been achieved, the training had given beneficiaries the tools to do so in future.
- Skilling for Change has also had a positive impact on financial inclusion, with women increasing their access to and use of a variety of financial services. This is particularly true of loans.
- The financial situation for families and individuals improved dramatically over the course of the programme: families' financial situations improved by a mean of 33%, and individual situations improved by a mean of 110%. Learning to save, and understanding how to manage and repay small loans, were cited as being central to this improvement.

¹¹² USD 117.43 to USD 137.44 (xe.com, 11/08/2016)

- Qualitative evidence supports a strong positive effect on decision making for women. Household decision making, which previously tended to be the preserve of men, is now more shared, and money that was previously being spent by men on beer or tobacco is instead going into VSLAs.
- Greater trust in women by their husbands, and support for their decisions, has been a key impact of Skilling for Change. This was enhanced by men's involvement in the training.
- Participants reported improved leadership abilities following the training, with some respondents sharing knowledge with family and community members. Some also reported that they had informally started to mentor other, less experienced, entrepreneurs and to give advice to start-ups.
- A number of women found it challenging to participate in training, manage their businesses and still fulfil their household duties; some respondents reported their spouses as helping in the home or in the business to manage the workload.

Global Mentoring Component

- 90% of those participating in the online mentoring component reported the impact as being positive or very positive.
- There was conflicting evidence regarding the impact on business revenue: while annual revenue increased on average by 8% between the baseline and the endline, there was also a large group of individuals who reported a fall in revenue. It is suggested that this finding is explored further with the Skilling for Change programme team.
- Sharing knowledge and learning from the mentor were the areas where greatest achievement was perceived by mentees; the area of least achievement was in improving mentees' financial knowledge and understanding of funding options.
- The greatest area of skills development for mentees was in strategy and management, although progress was evident in all dimensions.

Indirect and Unanticipated Impact

- The majority of participants' spouses were supportive of their involvement in the programme, although a small number were only persuaded once they were made aware of the benefits for the whole household. Some respondents, although a minority, experienced opposition and/or verbal abuse from their husbands as a result of their participation.
- Positive impact was reported for indirect beneficiaries as a result of the programme, including strong improvement for families in the areas of health and education, household resources (including livestock) and household relations.
- At community level, positive impacts were also reported as resulting from the programme. These impacts included reduced levels of poverty and the ability of the trained women to act as role models and mentors for community members wishing to start up businesses.
- The management of VSLAs was reported to have improved as an indirect benefit of the programme, as a result of better business knowledge and practices.

Efficiency

- The programme was successful in meeting all its targets in terms of recruitment and participation. This was the case for all four strands: online mentoring, financial literacy training, tailored training and business incubation/coaching.
- The programme design and delivery have been cost efficient, with success partly being due the model of building on existing structures (VSLAs). Budgets have been well managed and procurement processes are both thorough and ethical.

Sustainability

- Stakeholders believe that the programme can be both expanded in Rwanda and rolled out in other countries; there are elements of the design, however, which need amending in order to maximise the programme's success.
- Greater training and support for in-country partners will also be key for future programme sustainability, along with more rigorous quality assurance to check that implementation is in accordance with programme design.
- Ongoing support or training, building on what has already been delivered (including recaps of training content) would enable women to continue realising the benefits of their training. Sustainability will also be improved once the mobile loan solution has been developed to a point where it can be implemented effectively.

15. Recommendations

Programme Design

- **Streamlining and simplifying the training model:** While there may be an element of selection bias, it does appear that women from the more intensive programme benefited more from the training outcomes; it may be worthwhile for the programme, in future iterations, to streamline and simplify its model so that more women are able to benefit from this intensive training.
- **Introducing a cascade model of peer training:** In the same way, it may be more cost effective over time for the general training programme to be developed further into a cascade model of peer training. This would allow resources to be focused on areas where greatest impact may be achieved, through more intensive training.
- **Prioritising businesses with employment potential:** Greater attention could be given to selecting individuals with high growth or high growth potential businesses for more intensive levels of programme support, while continuing to ensure that these are businesses which also have potential for employment (and therefore community impact).
- **Ensuring targets have conceptual clarity and coherence:** Targets should be checked for conceptual coherence, and also for whether or not they realistically capture data which would have a positive benefit. One of the targets, for example, would require a significant net fall in employment levels for the minimum level to be met. A detailed review of intended community impact and expectations before developing targets would help to avoid this in future.
- **Investigating the benefits of including men in training:** It is worth CBFW considering the involvement of men in training in other places in which gender disparity is high; in Rwanda, it had the effect of increasing men's support for their partners' businesses and decision making.

Programme Delivery and Content

- **Increasing training and support for delivery partners:** Despite the programme focusing on women's economic empowerment, training was also delivered to men in some VSLAs. Further, there was anecdotal evidence that training sessions were not always delivered to specification, with some beneficiaries only receiving one day's training. It is hard for the Foundation to monitor these implementation issues from a distance. We therefore recommend more training and support for local partners, along with rigorous and ongoing quality assurance in project delivery.
- **Increasing levels of support for those with lower education levels:** Certain groups may require greater support from the programme in order to realise benefits. Those with lower levels of education, for example, tended to have poorer outcomes; these groups should be prioritised in terms of training and support in order to ensure greater impact across the whole community.
- **Providing advice to mitigate climate change impact:** Participants with agricultural businesses may benefit from technical and financial advice to help mitigate against the impact of climate and poor harvests, for example, greater knowledge of financial products related to crop insurance may help women better protect their businesses and ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Tailoring training content to ensure outcomes are met:** It would be valuable for the Foundation to review other areas of knowledge, skills and confidence for which outcomes were comparatively lower than others (for example, knowledge and skills to identify and select business opportunities), and to compare these against its aspirations for the programme. For areas of importance, it would be worth ensuring that greater focus is made in training content.
- **Ensuring clear distinctions between programmes:** There was insufficient distinction made between the training programme and the general work of CARE and the VSLAs; respondents were not always able to identify changes resulting from the Skilling for Change programme. Greater focus on ensuring that participants understand the distinctions between different programmes and activities may result in

impact being more accurately attributed to its source.

- **Ensuring clarity of language in training manuals:** Overly complex terminology in some training manuals and research tools may have confused some participants; there is some evidence that terms such as 'profit' were not fully understood. Ensuring that the training manuals are clear and that language used is appropriate to local contexts is critical.
- **Conducting context-specific assessments of financial solutions:** Context-specific assessment should be made of the value of loans to particular businesses, set against local interest rates. In some cases, where savings investment would otherwise be replaced by loans investment, the status quo may be preferable.
- **Delivering comprehensive needs assessments:** Relating to context, the Foundation may want to consider a detailed needs assessment in new countries/districts for programming in order to ensure that it is appropriate; spousal reaction to women's empowerment could be considered, for example, and additional support for how to mitigate negative reactions given in areas of need.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Framework

Dimension	Key Research Questions	Sources/Method
		Areas of Enquiry
Relevance	How far is the programme perceived as being relevant to beneficiary and local needs?	Priorities of women entrepreneurs; match between priorities/needs and programme
		Has the target audience responded positively to project activities?
Effectiveness	To what extent have the project objectives/ outcomes been achieved?	<p>Demand-led Skilling: <i>Equip more than 3 million people with the skills to get a job or build a business</i></p> <p>Employment and Entrepreneurship Outcomes: <i>Increase our focus on the successful transition from skill-building programs to sustainable jobs and businesses, and improve our collective ability to measure and report on these outcomes</i></p> <p>Collaboration for Durable, Systemic Change: <i>Bring together organisations across sectors to create large-scale, lasting solutions aimed at closing global employment gaps</i></p>
Impact	How, when, and for whom did the project make a difference? How significant was this difference?	Capability
		Business growth
		Economic empowerment/quality of life
Efficiency	Were project outputs delivered in accordance with the project plan and logframe?	Has the project reached the targeted number of individuals?
	To what extent were activities cost-efficient?	
Sustainability	What components of the methodologies and approaches can be used to maintain changes going forward?	Programme sustainability
	How did the combination of investment readiness, financial literacy, business training and incubation in Rwanda contribute to the project outcomes?	Key parts of the project; model for expansion/roll-out
	What was the most effective and sustainable model for connecting women entrepreneurs to financing services?	

Dimension	Key Research Questions	Sources/Method
		Areas of Enquiry
Learning	What were the most effective methodologies and approaches used to bring about changes to people's lives?	
	What were the reasons behind lack of success of the mobile lending solution, and what lessons can be learned for future programming?	What can be learned for future projects in terms of mobile lending solutions
	What else has worked and what has not? What lessons have been learned?	Key lessons for future project implementation

Appendix 2: Profile of Endline Respondents

Training Group	%
Whole group (A)	93.8%
High performing group - 150 (B)	5.1%
I-I coaching group - 80 (C)	1.1%

Marital Status	%
Single/never married	8.2%
Married	75.2%
Divorced	1.3%
Widowed	14.5%
Single mother	0.8%

Education Level	%
No formal education	25.4%
Primary education	66.8%
Secondary education	4.6%
TVET	3.3%

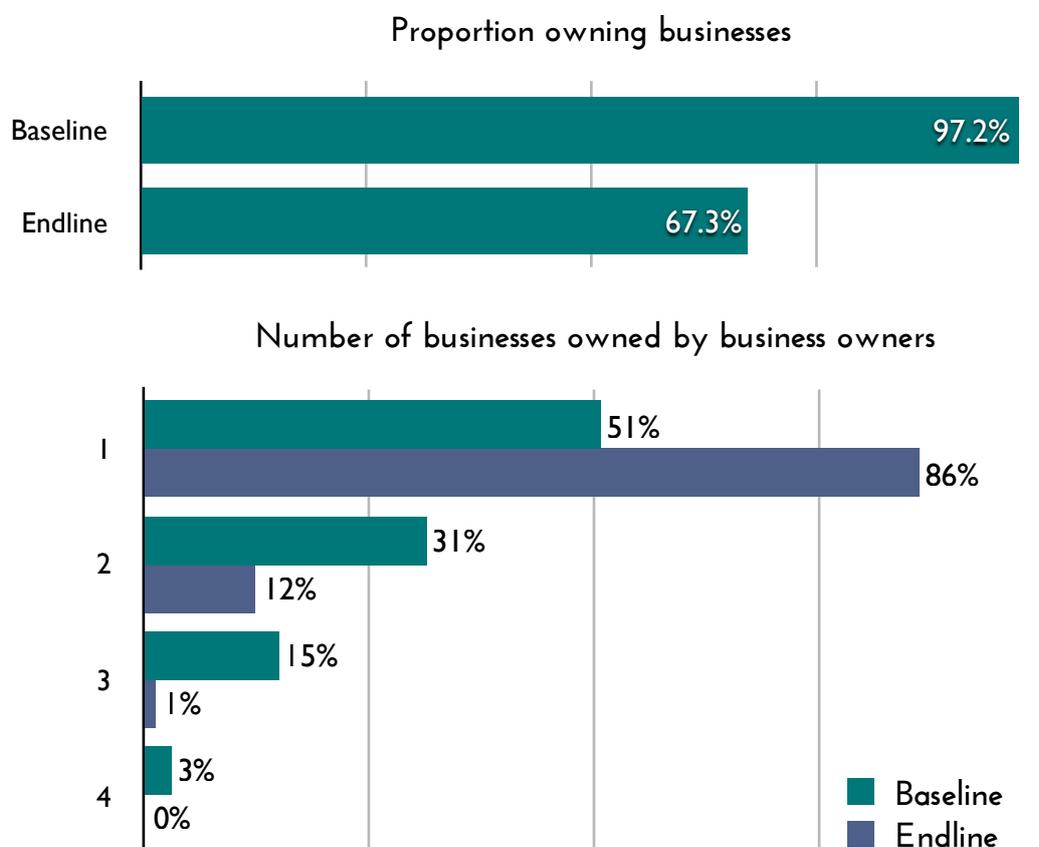
Birth Year	
Mean	1975 (age 41)
Oldest	1938 (age 78)
Youngest	1999 (age 17)

Appendix 3. Supplementary Quantitative Findings

The following sections outline quantitative findings which were found to be either partially or wholly inaccurate on the basis of supplementary qualitative analysis. This is likely because problems with the baseline data (absence of demographic information, which was expected to be included when the endline research was designed) meant that endline data could not be weighted to match the baseline, so we were not comparing like with like. Other findings included in the main body of the report have been verified by qualitative analysis.

They have been included for reference.

A3.1 Business Ownership



It is felt that business ownership has genuinely decreased, although to a much lesser extent than the graphs above would imply (hence not including these graphs in the main body of the report). This is not just related to the comparability issue; there is another important data reason for this fall not being as significant as the data would imply.

In the baseline survey, participants were asked whether they had a business in agriculture, whether they had a business in services etc, whereas in the endline survey, they were asked whether they had a business (without specifying sector; this question was duplicated from the baseline questionnaire in terms of phrasing, but this questionnaire later transpired not to have been the final version used in the baseline research - in other words, we were not comparing like with like). Qualitative survey information suggests that participants did not believe that they worked in business if they worked in agriculture - so agriculture businesses were counted in the baseline survey, but may not (all) have been counted in the endline survey.

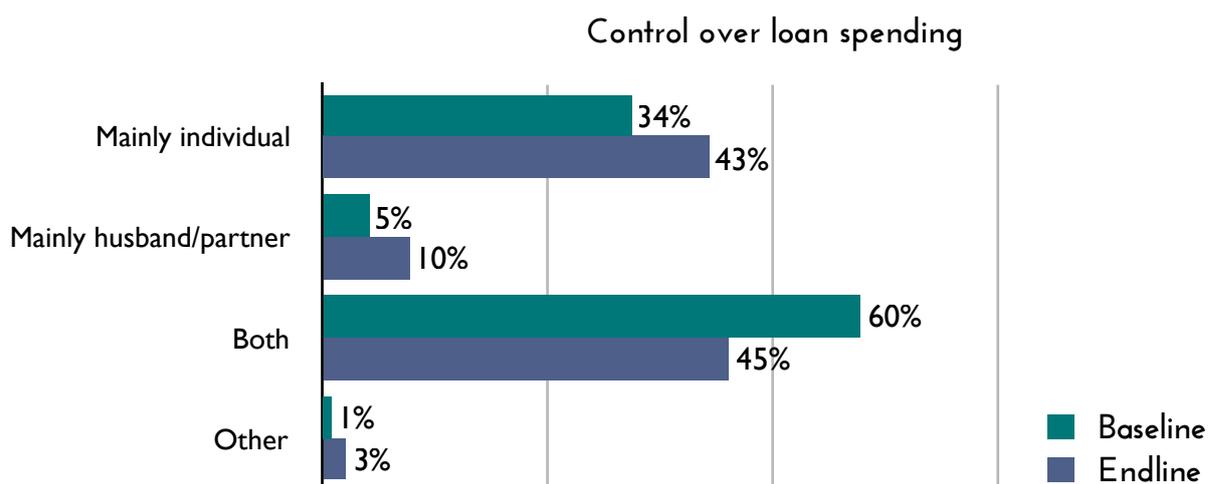
A3.2 Employment



There is a conflict between self-assessments of employees (which suggest a net increase in employees), and comparison between the baseline and endline data, which suggests a decrease in people employed over the course of the programme. There are problems with both measures: retrospective self-reporting is notoriously unreliable, and (as discussed elsewhere in this report) problems with the baseline data have meant that endline data could not be weighted, so a true like for like comparison was not assured.

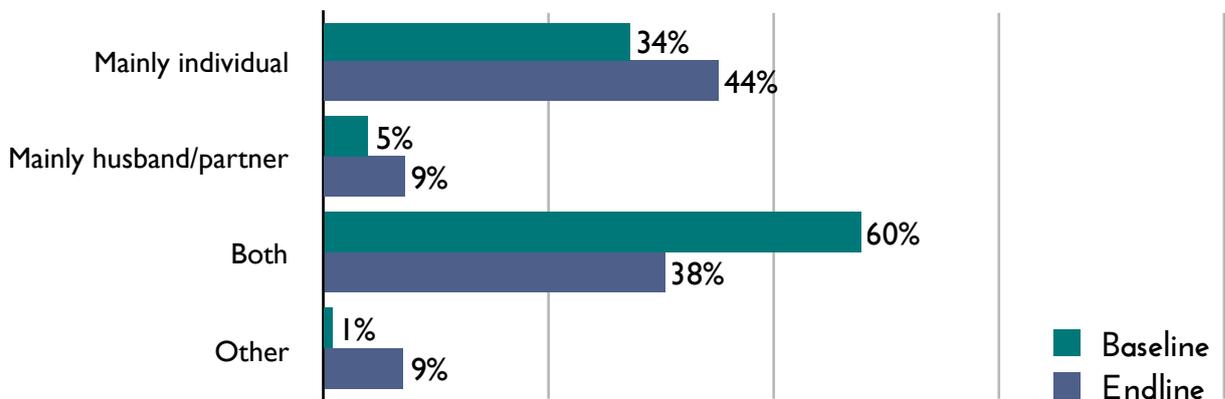
Falls in employment would appear to be consistent with the idea that the number of businesses has fallen dramatically. At the same time, the conflicting results from self assessment would also support a conclusion that the baseline and endline groups consist of a different profile of individuals, which cannot be corrected through weighting due to limitations with the baseline data. These limitations also make it difficult to gauge which interpretation is correct; it may well be a combination of the two; self assessment, as shown in the main body of the report, is likely to be more accurate (although also more positive than the reality).

A3.3 Decision Making



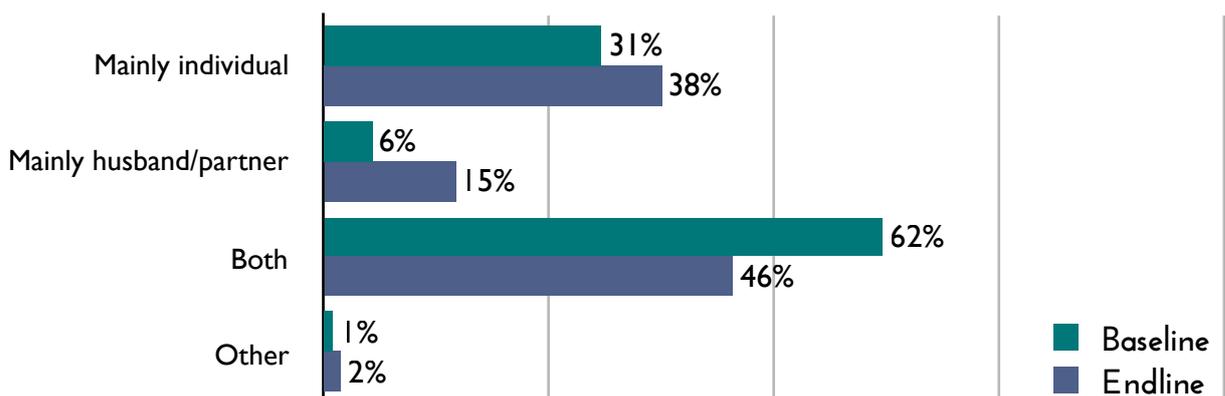
While individual decision making over loan spending increased over the programme, from 34% to 43%, overall control by women decreased. At the start of the programme, 94% of women had control over decisions either solely or jointly with their husband or partner; this figure was 87% at the end of the programme.

Control over key decisions regarding business finances



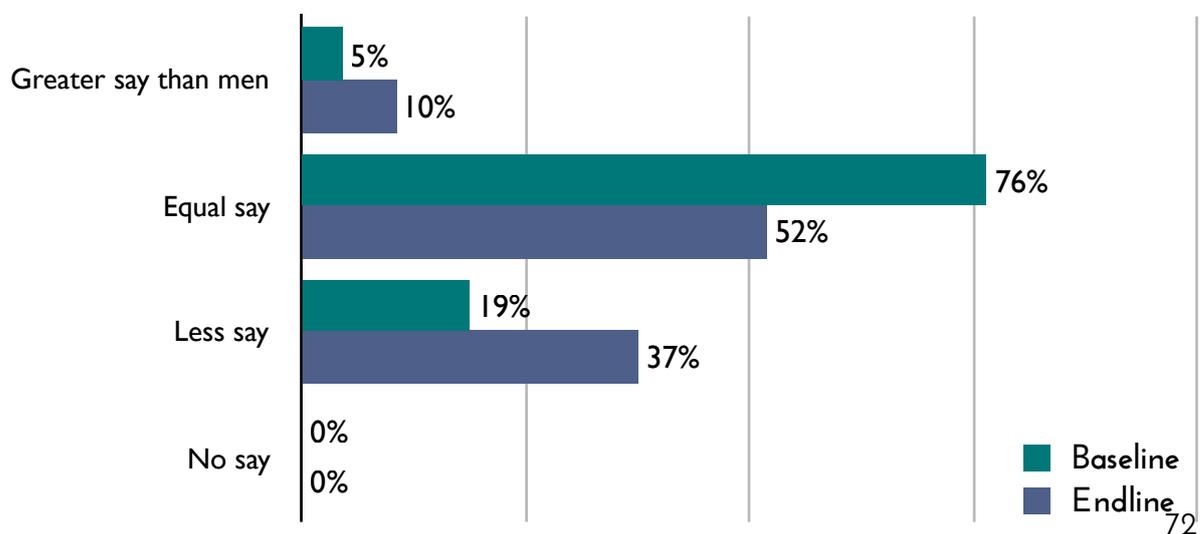
A similar pattern emerged for control over key decisions regarding business finances. Individual control increased from 34% to 44%, but sole/joint control decreased from 94% to 82%.

Control over key decisions regarding household finances



Again, individual control increased in control over key decisions regarding household finances, from 31% to 38%, but this was accompanied by a fall in combined sole/joint decision making, from 93% to 84%. In all three cases, increases in individual decision making was accompanied by a greater fall in joint decision making.

What should women's say in household financial decisions be?



This pattern is replicated in participants' views on what their say in household financial decisions should be. 10% of women at the end of the programme, compared to 5% at the start, said that women's say in household financial decisions should be greater than men, but the proportion stating that this say should be either equal to or greater than men decreased from 81% to 62%, with a commensurate increase in the proportion thinking that women should have less say.