

SLF supports many projects through one network in **Rwanda**



## **Rwanda Women's Community Development Network**

Founder and Director Mary V. Balikungeri writes, “ Our greatest strength at Rwanda Women’s network over the past 20 years has been our commitment to empower women for self-transformation and gender equality. No matter how long the journey, or how difficult the challenges, our determination continues to be women’s empowerment that influences positive transformation in their homes, communities and nation.”

Rwanda Women’s Network (RWN) is dedicated to promoting and strengthening strategies that empower women in Rwanda. It began in 1997 as a response to the genocide. It now has extensive experience in fostering women’s participation and grassroots responses to community challenges.

In 2007 RWN received the *UN-Habitat Dubai International Award* in “recognition of best practices to improve the living environment” for child-headed households, and genocide widows and their families. To date, RWN’s target group includes survivors of the 1994 Tutsi genocide; victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence; and other vulnerable groups, including poor and vulnerable women, children, and people living with HIV/Aids. Overall, the RWN supports and works with over 52 grassroots associations and cooperatives that cater for over 4,000 people each, within their communities in thirteen districts in Rwanda.



RWN has over 60 staff members across Rwanda. They focus on five main areas:

**HEALTH CARE & SUPPORT.** RWN offers a variety of health care interventions at Health Centers and through targeted projects, including reproductive health; sexual and gender-based violence; shelter construction and rehabilitation, HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support



### **EDUCATION & KNOWLEDGE SHARING.**

RWN seeks to enhance women's access to information in order to build their capacity to claim and enjoy their rights. It raises awareness of legal and human rights and provides formal and informal vocational training. RWN empowers women to identify injustices carried out towards them and take action.



## **GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION & RESPONSE**

RWN provides psychological support and counseling, raising awareness of human rights and existing legislation that denounces GBV, safe spaces for victims and survivors of GBV and a referral service for legal and medical issues.



## **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP**

RWN provides training to strengthen women's leadership skills and ensure that women actively participate in decision-making activities within their communities.



RWN also enhances citizen and community leadership relations through platforms for dialogues that influence policy development, change and implementation.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

RWN provides capacity development through financial credits for income generating activities and small-scale businesses (by the establishment of voluntary savings and loan associations).



So far, their engagements include marketplaces to sell soap , hand-knitted items and weaving. The women cultivate cassava (yuca) which they process into flour, to be bagged and sold at market.

They have also begun the assembly and distribution of environmentally friendly Save80 stoves. The name Save80 means you can save 80% of the firewood of a traditional open fireplace.



*2020 workshop "Cooking against climate change"*